

TOWARD A THEORY AND THEOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY  
IN SAMOA

A Professional Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the  
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Tafatoluomalua T. Filemoni  
May 1990

© 1990

Tafatoluomalua T. Filemoni

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*This professional project, completed by*

Tafatoluomalua T. Filemoni,

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty  
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

*Faculty Committee*

Alfred Moore

Andrew Sung Park

\_\_\_\_\_

April 20, 1990  
Date

Alfred Moore  
Dean

## ABSTRACT

### Toward a Theory and Theology of Educational Ministry in Samoa

Tafatoluomalua T. Filemoni

As a young Samoan minister I have always been intrigued by the educational ministry of the Samoan churches, both locally and abroad. The Samoans are very religious people. Their lifestyle and identity as a church is a fabrication of their culture and religious practices.

The ministry of the church in Samoa was founded on the educational practice(s) that was commonly used in the missionary era. The theology and the educational ministry was shaped under the shadow of the so-called "missionary theology." This is obvious since the Samoans received all their education from the missionaries. The Christian faith was transplanted in Samoa in a Western theological pod. This was spread over the islands without critical analysis and critique. So, the church and the educational ministry of the Samoan church owes its existence to the European missionaries, whose zeal for educational ministry was conversion and transmission of the faith.

This project attempts to show that the theology and educational practices of the (missionary) church consist of unresolved theological dualism. This dualism shaped the

educational practices, and created other forms of dualism, as well as misconceptions in the educational enterprise. The problem is both the dualism in the theological conceptualization, and the lack of critical consciousness in the practice of educational ministry in the local social and cultural context.

This project suggests that the conscientization of theology is the organizing principle for constructing an educational ministry that is more fitting to the local climate. Conscientization sketches out a relevant theology that is indigenized, contextualized, and most appropriate for the Samoan church. It will also provide an educational methodology relevant to the educational practice.

Although this study focuses primarily on the work of the Congregational Christian Church, I hope that it will shed some light on the educational ministry of the whole church in Samoa.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1.	Introduction . . . . .	1
	Problem Addressed by the Project . . . . .	2
	Importance of the Problem . . . . .	3
	Thesis. . . . .	5
	Definition of the Major Terms . . . . .	5
	Work Previously Done in the Field . . . . .	10
	Scope and Limitations of the Project. . . . .	17
	Methodology . . . . .	18
	Organization of the Project . . . . .	19
Chapter		
2.	The Theological Dualism and the Educational	
	Task . . . . .	21
	Introduction . . . . .	21
	The Samoan Culture. . . . .	22
	The Missionary Movement . . . . .	24
	The Missionary in Samoa . . . . .	25
	Types of Dualism and Misconceptions . . . . .	29
	The Theological Dualism and the Educational	
	Enterprise. . . . .	43

The Dualism of Human Nature and the	
Educational Task. . . . .	44
The Misconception of Faith and the	
Educational Ministry . . . . .	45
The Sexist Dualism and the Educational Task .	47
The Impact of Dualism on the Traditional	
Theological Approach to Educational Ministry	48
The Impact of Dualism on the Aim(s) of	
Educational Ministry. . . . .	50
The Impact of Dualism on the Content	
and Method . . . . .	51
Dualism and the Teacher-Learner Relationship .	54
Summary. . . . .	55

## Chapter

3. Toward a Theoretical Foundation of Educational	
Ministry. . . . .	60
Introduction. . . . .	60
Theological Foundation. . . . .	61
Socialization and Educational Ministry. . . .	70
The Educational Praxis Approach . . . . .	76
The Shared Christian Praxis Approach. . . . .	76
Paulo Freire and Praxis . . . . .	79
Conscientization and Paulo Freire . . . . .	83
Paulo Freire's Hermeneutic. . . . .	84
Summary of the Theorists. . . . .	86
Synthesis of the Theorists. . . . .	86

Implications. . . . .	90
Summary.. . . .	95

## Chapter

4. A Study of a Samoan Congregational Church. . .	99
Introduction. . . . .	99
Methodology . . . . .	100
Descriptive Information . . . . .	101
Observation . . . . .	104
Analysis. . . . .	106
Implications for Education. . . . .	114
Reflections on Aim(s) . . . . .	115
Content and Methodology . . . . .	118
Narrative Education . . . . .	118
Liberation Education . . . . .	120
Problem-Posing Education . . . . .	121
Summary . . . . .	122

## Chapter

5. Summary and Conclusion. . . . .	125
Restatement of the Problem and Thesis . . . .	125
Summary of the Summaries. . . . .	128
Conclusion. . . . .	131

Bibliography . . . . .	136
------------------------	-----



## DEDICATION

This Project is dedicated to my family.

To my parents

FILEMONI and PULOTU.

My brother and sister-in-law

FILEMONI FILEMONI Jr., and MEALEFU.

My sisters and brothers-in-law

LINA and HENNEY, FALEU and LAFOIA.

OSANA, JOAN, and PONTY.

My nephews and niece

LIONEL, DUSTY, TOLU, and LEVA.

My brothers and sisters in the gospel

KOME and MARIETA, TAPU, AFA, and MIRETA.

Their simple faith, love and prayers were always an inspiration and great encouragement. Their unceasing support motivated and enabled me to complete this project. To you my family, we have made it together.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of education, whether secular or religious, is to contribute to the development of a society, as well as the individual person. As such, educational programs tend to contribute to the development of the prescribed society. So various curricula have been proceeding forward in steady ways seeking means or models to improve and to maintain effectiveness, as well as growth in our technological world.

Society has continually changed and institutional changes have been many. There have been many efforts to help people achieve a minimum standard of education that will help them to be competent to deal with educational needs within their own culture and circumstances.

Within the context of the Church there is a need for a new model of educational ministry. The educational ministry of the Church in Samoa has dwelt for a long time in the missionary model. The missionary enterprise and the coming of Western Christianity have been closely linked with the cultural expansion of the Western world. The West exported their language, political ideas, economic systems, cultural patterns, technological advances and even forms of

organization. This is evident in the Church in how the message has been exported, shaped in creedal, organizational and liturgical forms of the West. The Church in Samoa needs to look for a new and revised educational model that is most appropriate and relevant in the context of her society.

Educational ministry necessarily deals with the question of how and where learning takes place. What we see, the meaning of our experience, our involvement, and the function of our leadership roles should take into account the nature and the function of our society.

Educational ministry is a field of enormous complexity. It is an area where one will be confronted with a lot of counter-trends. The educational ministry of the church needs to take into account the various dimensions that create many kinds of what H. Minor called "intersection." Intersection serves as a model where educational ministry takes place, finding how human concern meets the gospel. Thus, the intersection offers people not only information but also insights, feelings and attitudes. All of these are part of teaching, sharing and living the Christian faith.

#### **Problem Addressed by the Project**

The problem addressed by this project is the theological dualism imbedded in the Church's theology in the missionary era. It has shaped the educational ministry of the Church in Samoa. Consequently, this created other forms of dualism in the educational practice, as well as the

misconception in the practice of educational ministry in Samoa.

### Importance of the Problem

Unclear and inadequate understanding of the theory and the theology of the educational ministry creates both the misconception of the educational ministry, as well as the perpetuation of the dualism in the practice of educational ministry. Thus, in order to design a curriculum that is consistent and relevant, it is fundamentally important to have a well-thought-out theory and theology that is most appropriate for the educational enterprise.

Generally speaking, education is the process of interrelating and integrating the diverse experience and the various fields of study, fostering and promoting understanding and knowledge. It involves and deals not only with what is to be taught, but also with the how, why, when, and where of the educational practices. The educator presupposes assumption(s) about what is involved in the educational enterprise. These presuppositions and assumptions affect the fundamental rationale of one's educational theory and the basic concepts of the educational practice. The goal(s), strategy, concepts, structures, curriculum, methodology and even the vision of educational ministry evolve out of the educational ministry that one espouses. Normally, the confusion, inconsistency, and incongruence that occur in educational practices are the

result of poor curriculum design or an inadequate and uncritical understanding of the theory and theology that are employed in the educational enterprise. In most cases, the theory and the practices that are used to execute the educational practice are both inconsistent and incongruent.

If the problem is not solved, the educational ministry in Samoa will not only be stagnated, but it will revolve around practices that are outdated, as well as lack vision for educational ministry in the future.

The educational ministry (Christian education) of the Church has a long history, yet it is difficult to outline and define how the enterprise should be done. Whatever the various definitions are, one of the common characteristics is that they sketch out something (sometimes vaguely) about the task, aim and purpose of educational ministry. Commenting on this problem, Alfred North Whitehead, author of The Aim of Education and Other Essays, says "education is a difficult problem to be solved in one simple formula."<sup>1</sup>

Knowing and understanding the problem is vitally important in the educational enterprise. The knowledge of the problem helps in outlining aims and objectives in educational practices. Clear aims are guides for specific achievements, organized for the educational ministry of the church. In the words of Richard S. Peter, author of

---

<sup>1</sup> Alfred N. Whitehead, The Aim of Education and Other Essays (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 47.

Authority, Responsibility and Education, "the so called aims are neither goals nor end products, but ways of talking about doing some things rather than others and doing them in a certain way...."<sup>2</sup>

The point is that theoretical, theological and philosophical disputes continue to slip by because of the lack of clarity in the problems addressed, as well as the vague slogans that are employed. A very clear understanding of the problem(s) will set the stage in finding the solution(s) to the issues. This project aims at raising critical consciousness, awareness on the educational and theological assumptions, and the implications for adequate educational ministry in Samoa.

### Thesis

Raising critical awareness and constructing a clear and adequate theoretical and theological approach will not only improve the educational ministry in Samoa, but will bring a new type of education. Constructing an educational ministry that is theologically authentic and educationally appropriate to the cultural "climate" and heritage will give a solution to the problem.

### Definition of Major Terms

This section consists of definition of some of the major terms used in the project. Clarity of definition(s)

---

<sup>2</sup> Richard S. Peter, Authority, Responsibility and Education (London: Aleen & Unwin, 1960), 86.

is important in dealing with the issues involved in the project.

### Education

In this project, education will refer to the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensitivities, as well as any outcomes of that effort.<sup>3</sup> It implies the process of learning, and that a person's outlook is shaped and transformed by what one knows. Further, education is linked with the idea of development of the stages of a person that involves knowledge and understanding in depth and breadth.

### Ministry

Ministry in this context refers to the activity of being in relationship with the other in an educational manner. It entails "doing" or action. This means that ministry is serving others. In other words, ministry is the activity of the people involved in the educational enterprise.

### Educational Ministry

It refers to the intentional, deliberate effort to evoke or transmit knowledge, attitudes, values in the educational service of the church or community. Educational ministry then refers to the activities of the church in

---

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence A. Cremin, Public Education (New York: Basic, 1976), 27.

evoking, transmitting, and nurturing the faith and the life of the church.

### Theology

Theology is generally understood as the study or thinking about God. However, theology is more than just talking about God. It is reflecting on humanity and the world around us. It involves talking about human experience, divine revelation, and their relationship in history. So, theology in this context means own reflection on God, people, the world, and our commitment to the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ.

### Theory

Generally speaking, a theory is a procedure that guides action. It is "a vehicle for explanation, prediction, or control."<sup>4</sup> It explains events by setting forth a proposition from which the events may be inferred.<sup>5</sup> Theory then refers to an attempt to explain how things have come to be as they are. It attempts to explain what is likely to happen in the future.<sup>6</sup> In other words, what a theory does is create reality; it focuses on what one is looking for.

---

<sup>4</sup> Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schon, Theory in Practice (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> T. W. Moore, Education Theory: An Introduction (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 3.



### Educational Theory

An educational theory is basically a practical theory. It tries to tell us what to do. Educational theory presupposes educational activities and depends upon them for its points. To use T. W. Moore's words, "educational theory is an organized body of principles and recommendations directed towards those concerned with educational practice."<sup>7</sup>

### Curriculum

Curriculum has been defined in various ways. In this project, curriculum is the plan for an educational program. P. H. Hurst, the co-author of The Logic of Education, refers to curriculum as the "programme or courses of activities which is explicitly organized as the means whereby pupils may attain the desired objectives, whatever these may be."<sup>8</sup> In short, curriculum is a plan for the teaching-learning process.

### Teaching

Teaching is the activity by which the teacher and learner deal with subject matter in such a way that will enhance understanding of truth and reality. It entails the activity of showing how to do something, such as helping another person to accomplish and attain knowledge and

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> P. H. Hurst. ed., The Logic of Education (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 62.

understanding. Thomas F. Green, the author of The Activity of Teaching, refers to teaching as the activity of the transmission of knowledge and the formation of behavior.<sup>9</sup>

In short, teaching is the process whereby the teacher and learner, deliberately and intentionally, help one another to assess and understand truth and reality, and enables the persons to deal with their situation(s) in life.

### Problematic

Various problems have different cause(s), and there may be more than one root of a given problem. Problematic thus refers to the overall root that may be the cause of the problem situation. In other words, problematic means the condition needing "correction" or "transformation" by an educational process. In short, problematic means what needs to be corrected or transformed.

### Espoused Theory

Espoused theory basically refers to what to do in order for an event or activity to happen. It means that one is assuming that "if" one does "A" "then" "B" will happen.

### Theory-in-Use

Theory-in-use refers to what one is doing or using in order to reach or achieve an outcome. In other words, theory-in-use determines our action. Theory-in-use then is the means for getting what one wants.

---

<sup>9</sup> Thomas F. Green, The Activities of Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 22.

### Work Previously Done in the Field

The educational ministry of the church by and large has a long history. There have been a lot of scholastic efforts, and specialized studies done by people who have done some work in this area in general. All these works have been done from particular perspectives or grew out of particular situation(s) in the history of the educational enterprise. These books were intended mainly for English readers who were interested in the area of religious education. The selection of these works was chosen on the basis of their themes and objectives.

The background of Harrison S. Elliott's work is the transitional period when the Church was facing a crisis in the nature of religious education (1940). In his book, Can Religious Education Be Christian?, he discusses the issues confronting the religious education field prior to the 1940s. The problem addressed by Elliott is "the tendency in the Protestant churches to return to the historical formulations of the Christian religion and to repudiate... modern scientific and social developments."<sup>10</sup> He rejected returning to what he considered to be an inadequate neo-orthodox version of Christianity, as well as the authoritarian approach to religious education. He opted for the liberation approach of which he is a proponent. In

---

<sup>10</sup> Harrison S. Elliott, Can Religious Education Be Christian? (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 9.

short, his argument is education-oriented.

In his book, Faith and Nature, H. Shelton Smith expresses his opposition to Harrison's position. The major question that Smith addressed is "Shall Protestant nurture realign its theological foundations with the new currents of Christian thought, or shall it resist those currents and merely reaffirm its faith in traditional liberalism?"<sup>11</sup> Smith's argument emphasizes theology, and paved the way for a return to a theological approach in theory of religious education.

Randolf Crump Miller, one of the contemporary figures in religious education and author of many books, including The Clue to Christian Education, points out that the problem in the educational ministry of the church is the lack of theology in Christian education. Theology should be at the center of Christian education. The objectives, theory and methods of Christian education need to be undergirded and altered by a more self-conscious theological reconstruction. According to Miller, theology has been presented without the methods to bring them to life in the experience of the learner.<sup>12</sup> The task of Christian education is not to teach theology, but to use theology as the basic tool for bringing

---

<sup>11</sup> H. Shelton Smith, Faith and Nurture (New York: Scribner, 1941), vii.

<sup>12</sup> R. C. Miller, The Clue to Christian Education (New York: Scribner, 1950), 2.

the learner to the right relationship with God.<sup>13</sup> In sum, there are two predominant themes that Miller is suggesting. First, theology should be at the center of the educational ministry. Second, theory should guide practice and practice to inform and reform theory. In short, Miller points out that we need theory and practice that are intimately related to all of life condition.

James D. Smart also discusses the theological basis of Christian education. Education in the Church must emanate from theology. In his book, The Teaching Ministry of the Church, he espouses a theological foundation for education in the Church (key element in his model). The teaching ministry of the Church is the whole Church educating for discipleship, not moralizing. He argues that religious education be understood in the background of the New Testament concept of God and the Church.<sup>14</sup> The teaching ministry belongs to the Church as a whole, and for Smart, this is not taken seriously by the Church.

D. Campbell Wyckoff argues that the problem that faces Christian education is its need to understand itself, to gain deeper insight into what it is about.<sup>15</sup> His book, The

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>14</sup> James D. Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 98.

<sup>15</sup> D. Campbell Wyckoff, The Gospel and Christian Education (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 7.

Gospel and Christian Education, is an attempt to demonstrate how a theory of Christian education that is theologically valid and educationally sound may be constructed on the gospel of Jesus Christ. To Wyckoff, the whole Christian education program may be an experience of the gospel and the gospel function in the life of the Church. In his other book, Theory and Design of Christian Education Curriculum, he pays adequate attention to the context, scope, purpose, process and design of Christian education.<sup>16</sup>

John H. Westerhoff III, another contemporary figure in religious education, suggested that the problem in religious education is the "schooling" paradigm. He suggests a shift to a "community of faith-enculturation paradigm." He proposes a process of intentional religious socialization as the effective approach to education. Religious socialization is "a process consisting of life long formal and informal mechanisms, through which persons sustain and transmit their faith... with its rites, rituals... and activities."<sup>17</sup> Socialization involves the transmitting of values, and the shaping of attitudes, and behaviors. Uniting learning and liturgy will enhance Christian education.

Thomas Groome discusses the "shared Christian praxis"

---

<sup>16</sup> D. Campbell Wyckoff, Theory and Design of Christian Education Curriculum (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), chapters 3-5.

<sup>17</sup> J. H. Westerhoff, III, and Gwen K. Neville, Generation to Generation (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), 41.

approach to Christian education. Educational ministry for him entails education for the Kingdom. He outlines his objective in educational ministry as the process of enabling people to live lives of Christian faith and leading people out to the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. Religious education according to Groome is "a political activity... [that] intentionally attends... to the activity of God, the story of the faith community, ... [the] vision of God's Kingdom...."<sup>18</sup> Groome suggests that in educational ministry we enable the people to tell their story so that they can identify with the Biblical story and become agents for the Kingdom. Put in another way, it is sharing the faith stories as an intentional activity, and placing emphasis on the story of the Christian faith--culminating ultimately in the vision of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ.

Paulo Freire, an influential third world educator from Brazil, suggests that the "banking" idea of education is an instrument of oppression. Banking concepts of education controls the thinking of the learner and inhibits their creativity. For Freire the human is supposed to be a Subject not an object, and has the function of participating in transforming the world. "Man's ontological vocation is to

---

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Groome, Christian Religious Education (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 25.

be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world."<sup>19</sup>

According to Freire, education should be for people to critically encounter with reality and participate in the transformation. Freire suggests "praxis" as an alternative to the banking method. This approach is "action-reflection." This entails the raising of peoples' consciousness, making them aware of their situation and being involved in the reconstruction. In other words, the problem-posing approach is more appropriate and effective in this context. It is dialogical and it enhances student-learner dialogue, thus promoting joint responsibility in the educational practice.

Within the context of the Samoan Church, there is very limited (scarcely any) work done in this area. In his Doctor of Ministry project, Samoan Cultural Values and Christian Thought, Faafouina Iofi attempts to clarify and relate some of the Samoan cultural values to Christian understanding.<sup>20</sup> He asserts that the Samoan values can be integrated with Christian understanding to help the Samoans affirm the best in their cultural heritage. Iofi affirms that the Samoan culture can be appreciated more fully by its

---

<sup>19</sup> Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Continuum, 1984), 12.

<sup>20</sup> Faafouina Iofi, "Samoan Cultural Values and Christian Thought," (D.Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1980), 83-99.



own people as well as others when it is understood in its biblical and theological relevance to present day thinking. This implies that it is only in the light of the culture's theological relevance that educational ministry will have any significant impact in present day Samoa.

Ulisese E. Sala in his Doctor of Ministry project, A Theology of Samoan Christian Immigrants in the United States, attempts to construct a theology that can be relevant and applicable in the context of the Samoan immigrants.<sup>21</sup> He utilizes his experience as a pastor both in Hawaii and Southern California, as well as some of the other general findings in his work. His frame of reference, the experience of the Israelites (from nomadic life to city life in Canaan), is the starting point towards a theology of (what he calls) the "Samoan-Americans." In short, the Christian faith, the Samoan culture, and the impact of the technological society in North America upon the Samoans becomes his subject of reflection.

The above discussion points out the shift in themes and the emphases in the methodology of the educational ministry. Some theorists (like Miller) emphasize the centrality of theology in the educational ministry. Then there is the shift to a faith-enculturation paradigm (Westerhoff). The

---

<sup>21</sup> Ulisese E. Sala, "A Theology of Samoan Christian Immigrants in the United States," (D.Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1980), 52-101.

focus is socialization into the community of faith. In this context, it is the process of becoming (Christian becoming).

In the works of Groome and Freire, the shift is toward the idea of reconstruction. Though these two works have different contexts, they both emphasize "praxis" (action-reflection).

The works of Iofi and Sala are the first attempts to outline and sketch out a theological dialogue between the Samoan cultural values and system, and the Christian faith. Such reflection provides the atmosphere for constructing a theology appropriate to the Samoan context. There is a tendency in their strategies to be primarily objective, focusing on the implication and application of the Christian (Western) faith in relationship to Samoan cultural values and system. Subsequently, suggestions and recommendations for theological reflection are basically Western theology rather than indigenous. An objective as well as a subjective approach may be more appropriate.<sup>22</sup> Such hermeneutical process provides the tools for an indigenous and authentic Samoan theology.

#### Scope and Limitations of the Project

The primary intention in this project is to identify the problem in the educational ministry in Samoa. Such a

---

<sup>22</sup> To me a subjective approach is: What, how does one's cultural experience mean in exploring, and in relationship to the way we understand our faith?

task will entail raising critical awareness and identifying issues and implications that are helpful and relevant to the Samoan situation. The most apparent limitation of this project is the limited resources and documents in this field within the Samoan situation. I also realize that this project is limited to the work of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa. This is a limitation, not a problem. However, this is indicative of the educational ministry in the Samoan church as a whole.

The author writes as a Samoan who belongs to the present day Samoa, yet at the same time can be critical of the educational ministry in Samoa. This project claims no final authority with respect to the subject. Rather, it seeks to advance discussion of the subject and the issues involved.

### Methodology

The methodology in this project is a descriptive and analytical research. This project integrates theological and educational disciplines appropriate to the assigned task. It also integrates resources available, the author's experience and the Samoan situation. Suggestions, recommendations, implications that are valuable, relevant and appropriate for the educational ministry will evolve out of this context.

### Organization of the Project

In Chapter 2, the discussion focuses on the theological dualism and misconception in the educational ministry of the Samoan Church. The development of the misconception and dualism can be traced back as far as the period of classicism. Different types of misconception and dualism will be discussed, focusing on how the social, philosophical, and theological climate of the different periods of history have shaped this dualism and misconception. The main focus is how the misconceptions and dualism have informed or shaped the educational ministry. It is necessary to have a sound educational and theological base for educational ministry.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to discuss the theoretical foundation of educational ministry. The works of Miller (theology), Westerhoff (socialization), Groome and Freire (praxis) are discussed. The main emphasis in this chapter is educational ministry, which must have an adequate and clear theoretical and theological foundation.

In Chapter 4, a case study of a Samoan congregation is discussed. The focus is the implication of the theorists' views on the situation, how the theorists address the issues, and how they can contribute to creating an appropriate solution.

The last chapter is the summary and conclusion. It consists of the restatement of the problem and thesis, the

summary of the summaries, and the conclusion. A brief explanation of the next step in the research is also mentioned in this section.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Theological Dualism and the Educational Task

#### Introduction

By and large, theological conceptualization is the organizing principle of the educational ministry of the church, though there are some who put more emphasis on education.<sup>1</sup> Evidently, the educational ministry has been hindered by dualism in the church's theology.

The purpose of this chapter is to show, through the case of Samoa, the impact of Western dualism upon the theology(s) undergirding the missionary movement, and the consequent impact of theological dualism upon the educational ministry of Samoa.

The thesis of this chapter is that various forms of theological dualism, that shaped the missionaries' perception of meaning and reality, had a significant and dominant influence on the development of educational ministry of the church in Samoa. While I believe this phenomenon is widespread, and has a very long history, I am

---

<sup>1</sup> There is no particular nuance intended in employing the term "educational ministry" instead of Christian education. My concern is to utilize the term to emphasize the broader dimension of this function of the church. See chapter 1 for clarification of the term.

beginning with the case of Samoa. After discussing the Samoan culture and the impact of missionaries in Samoa, I will turn to a discussion of dualism. In the next section I will discuss the impact of dualism upon the educational task. The last section concludes with a summary of the chapter.

### The Samoan Culture

Samoans belong to the Polynesian race, one of the three major racial groups that make up the Pacific Islands. The Samoans are social, cheerful, polite, and hospitable people.<sup>2</sup> They are also religious people. Before the arrival of Christianity, the Samoans worshipped a number of deities. Each family, village, and district had its tutelary deity. There were also priests for various purposes, and the practice of giving offerings (to gods) was a familiar one. Thus, the Samoans were familiar with theological conceptualization in their practices. However, this was not how missionaries understood the natives.

The Samoan people are a community-bound society. They are a people whose identity is shaped by a cultural understanding of a cooperative community, a fellowship community. It is a holistic understanding of community and life in general. As a community, the family (extended family) is of paramount importance. The family is a unit of

---

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Ellison, Opening and Penetration of Foreign Influence in Samoa to 1880 (Corvallis: Oregon State College, 1938), 13.

life rather than the individual.<sup>3</sup> It is a cooperative unit, the most "sacred" of all institutions. The family welfare and resources are managed and administered by the matai.<sup>4</sup> The family system supports each other. The basic role of the family is to maintain unity, solidarity and the sharing for the good of all. Thus, the notion of sharing (not ownership) is the essence of the Samoan family and community.

Further, the Samoans tend to be "action" oriented (compared with the Western emphasis on "reflection"). This does not imply that the Samoans do not reflect. Rather, for the Samoans, life is an activity, an action. It is "doing" and involvement in the world and with nature. In the process of acting they are also doing reflection (praxis). In Western society, reflection tends to be the prerequisite of action. Rationalization predetermines the involvement and action.

In the Samoan culture, the notion of "being" is very important. The central focus is being good, loving, caring, cooperative, honest, just, and holistic. "Being" in this context refers to a state of existence, embracing all of the

---

<sup>3</sup> F. M. Keesing, Modern Samoa (Stanford: Univ. Press, 1934), 30.

<sup>4</sup> The matai often translated "chief," is the person who holds a title conferred by the extended family. His/her major function is to oversee, manage and administer with care the affairs and the well-being of the family.



characteristics of life. Being loving and just, naturally involves the doing of "loving" and "just" action.

Moreover, the concept of relationship is of significant importance. It bespeaks of the relationship of and with the people, with God and also with nature. The Samoans are in tune with nature, being in communion and in harmony with nature. In short, the Samoan culture has a holistic understanding of life.

### The Missionary Movement

The success of the missionary movement and the spread of the Western Christianity went hand in hand with the spread of Western civilization. In fact it may be suggested that to an extent it was more "Westernization" than "Christianization." The spread of the missionary movement also marked the spread of western ideology, culture and value systems. This was rather obvious in the work of the missionaries in places like Samoa, for example.

In country after country and among people after people, missionaries, particularly Protestant missionaries, were pioneers in introducing aspects of Western civilization which they believed would be of use to non-Europeans (the natives). This was particularly true with the islands of the Pacific, such as Samoa.

Like other colonial churches, the Samoan Church received all of its knowledge from the missionaries, whose primary aim was conversion. However, there was also

indication of the demonstration of technology in the process. Their task, on one hand, was to undercut the natives' belief in their own faith and even their native gods. On the other, it was the attempt to prove the superiority of the "white" god. In other words, the smashing of the idols was the strategy for conversion. Evidently, conversion was perceived as the task of educational ministry. Consequently, the Church (in Samoa) has dwelt in this missionary model for a long time. Thus, educational ministry has been equated with conversion and the saving of the souls. The author is suggesting that this frame of reference creates a lot of misconception and misunderstanding among the natives regarding the nature of the educational ministry. Is the educational ministry the same as conversion or saving of the souls? If not, what is the norm and criterion for such practice? It is the lack of criticism, and the lack of clarity in the educational enterprise, that leads to the diverse dualism in the educational practice both in the past and the present.

#### The Missionary in Samoa

Christianity was brought to Samoa at a very critical point of her history. When John Williams of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and his group arrived at one of the islands (Savaii) of the Samoan group, Samoa was in the midst

of war.<sup>5</sup> "While we were landing the messengers of the Gospel of peace on the one shore, the flames of a devastating war were blazing on the opposite; and under these striking circumstances was this interesting mission commenced."<sup>6</sup> Though Christianity arrived at the time of great war, the Samoan field was ripe for harvest. "The cult of nature spirits in the villages was quickly challenged by Christianity's 'dogmas' and 'mana.'"<sup>7</sup> It has been suggested that the history of the Church in Samoa is rooted in the missionary success. "Samoa is famous among nineteenth-century missions for educational work."<sup>8</sup> The educational work in this context was primarily associated with conversion.

As indicated earlier, the primary task of the missionary educational work was to overthrow heathenism. So the traditional culture and practices of the natives were challenged primarily by comparing them with the papalagi's

---

<sup>5</sup> Norman Goodall, A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945 (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954), 353. See also N. A. Rowe, Samoa Under the Sailing Gods (London: Putman, 1930), 21-34.

<sup>6</sup> John Williams, A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands (London: John Snow, 1838), 287.

<sup>7</sup> John Garrett, To Live Among the Stars (Suva, Fiji: World Council of Churches, 1982), 121.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Lovett, The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895, vol. 1 (London: Oxford, 1899), 389.

(foreigner's) value system.<sup>9</sup> It is becoming evident that the methodology utilized for conversion (educational work) was shaped by dualism. So dualism was at the heart of the missionary theology and educational method.

At the first missionary meeting with the natives, the Samoan values were compared to that of the white missionary.

"Can the religion of these wonderful papalagis be anything but wise and good? ...look at them and look at ourselves; their heads are covered, while ours are exposed to the heat of the sun and the wet rain; their bodies clothed all over with beautiful cloth, while we have nothing but a bandage of leaves around our waist; they cloth upon their feet, while ours are like dogs'; and then look at their axes, their scissors, and their other property, how rich they are!"<sup>10</sup>

Renouncing of idolatry was primarily associated with the educational task. Chief Malietoa was induced to make a trial of denouncing his native pagan god. The fish called anae (mullet) which was regarded "tabu" and as the residing place for the tutelary gods was cooked for food.<sup>11</sup> This incident created a lot of excitement. There were a lot of friends and relatives who came to witness this unusual incident. In fact there was expectation that something catastrophic would happen. On the appointed day this

---

<sup>9</sup> Papalagi is a Samoan word for white foreigners. The word palagi is made up of two syllables, pa meaning burst, and lagi which means sky. Thus, papalagi means the sky burst and so came the white foreigners.

<sup>10</sup> Williams, 282.

<sup>11</sup> James M. Alexander, The Islands of the Pacific (New York: American Tract Society, 1895), 282.

forbidden fish was set before Malietoa, and he ate it. To the peoples' surprise nothing catastrophic happened.<sup>12</sup> Since that day many renounced their idol gods and claimed the new religion to be true. This was another example of the success of the missionary and the superior power of the white god. Theologically and educationally, what does this say about the nature of the educational ministry within the context of a different culture? Is not this undercutting the native faith in their own "indigenous faith," thus injecting the superiority of a foreign god at the expense of nurturing the "Godliness" and "Christness" in their indigenous faith and cultural belief?

As pointed out earlier, Christianity was imported to Samoa with unresolved (Western) dualism. Christianity was brought to the islands like a pot plant all wrapped up in and with foreign clothing or soil, as well as foreign dualism. As the church grew bigger and stronger, the dualism that was imbedded in its original, traditional form has firmly established its roots in the Samoan church. These dualisms are still present in the educational ministry of the Samoan church today. The Samoan church has dwelt for a long time in the missionary model. "The history of Samoa is the history of the London Missionary Society."<sup>13</sup> It is

---

<sup>12</sup> Alan R. Tippet, People Movements in Southern Polynesian (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 164-5.

<sup>13</sup> Goodall, 352.

now time for critical consciousness raising, and for the kind of theology and educational ministry that is both authentic and most appropriate to her own Christian cultural situation.

### Types of Dualism and Misconceptions

The main concern in this section is to point out the types of dualism in the theology of the church. To mention a few, these dualisms are mainly in the understanding of God, the human nature, spirit-body dualism, sexist dualism, and the dualistic understanding of faith. The theological dualism determines not only the shape of the educational task but also creates other forms of dualism.

#### Nature of Humanity

In his book, Embodiment, James B. Nelson addresses the issue of dualism. Dualism is any dichotomy in which two different elements which may live together in harmony do not do so, but instead are frequently in conflict.<sup>14</sup> Within this context, Nelson suggests that "embodiment" is a theology which begins with ourselves as embodied agents. Our bodies are ourselves. The body is the means by which one knows the objects, persons, and events.<sup>15</sup> This way of thinking relies particularly on our experience of our sexuality as a source of information to be used in the

---

<sup>14</sup> James B. Nelson, Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), 37.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 20.

shaping of one's theological view. "Our bodies mirror and symbolize our perception of the world, and our perceptions of the world feed back upon our understandings of our bodies."<sup>16</sup> This interaction of body-world is fundamentally important in Nelson's embodiment theology. Nelson refers to sexuality as our way(s) of thinking and acting as beings, as male and female. Thus, within this context, sexuality is both the physiological and psychological grounding of our human capacity.

When one is involved in this kind of interaction, it involves both objective and subjective approaches. The traditional approach (objective) deals with the question of what the Christian faith has to say about one's life as a sexual being. The other approach (subjective) deals with exploring what our experience as sexual beings means in relationship to the way we understand and live our faith.

Nelson claims that our experience as (sexual) beings has been distorted and permeated by two dualisms, namely "spiritualistic dualism" and "sexist dualism." Dualism is associated with alienation, and alienation is the root experience of sin.<sup>17</sup> From this point of view it suggests that we are often alienated from our bodies. As a result, we tend to regard fleshy relationships as less important

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 41.

than a theology that affirms the goodness of God and the creation.

Further, dualism is usually experienced and illustrated in a triadic manifestation, namely, alienation experienced within the self, alienation from the neighbor, and alienation from God.<sup>18</sup> The dualism of alienation within the self is basically the dissociation of the self from the body. This is more psychological. But there is also a physiological aspect when the mind is dissociated with the body. Thus, one feels as if the mind is detached from the emotions and the feelings. Therefore, there is always the tendency that one regards thinking as opposed to feeling. When the mind is alienated from the body it will consequently lead to a total rejection of the body. The alienation from within self does have outward projection. When mind and body are dissociated, it affects human interaction. Thus, this leads to dissociation and distance from relationships to others. It is the alienation from the neighbors. Finally, alienation from God implies that in our sin the self (person) becomes a rebel against God and so brings disorder into the creation, and our relationship in general.

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



### Spiritualistic Dualism

The "spiritualistic dualism" refers to the distortion or the split between the self and the body in which the "whole" or "real self" is regarded as immaterial and incorporeal. This dualism is dated back to the body-spirit dichotomy that was predominant in the Greek philosophy and culture. This dichotomy is quite obvious in the writings in the Classical era, especially people like Plato and his contemporaries. In the Greek Classical Era (represented by Plato, Aristotle), knowledge or the mind is superior to the body. For Plato, the person is composed of body and soul. The soul is the seat of reason (knowledge) and it is immortal. Thus, temporal joining of the souls and body will hinder the activity of the soul. Obviously, there was pessimism about the body as both mortal and inferior. For Plato, pure knowledge, which is the knowledge of the "good," is knowledge that is not associated with body. According to Plato, knowledge of the good is the ultimate lure for all education.<sup>19</sup> At the beginning of the Christian era, this understanding of the self was prominent in the Greek culture. Consequently, this dualism has an impact in the Christian theology of the human nature.

---

<sup>19</sup> R. S. Brumbaugh and N. M. Lawrence, Philosophers on Education: Six Essays on the Foundations of Western Thought (Boston: Houghton, 1963), 25.

In pre-Christian Samoa, the notion of spiritualistic dualism was very minimal. Traditionally, the human being was understood as partly human and partly spirit. There has always been an implicit understanding on this interplay of the flesh and spirit in the traditional notion of humanity. However, the person was generally referred to as "flesh," and as such, there is a dichotomy of the sacred and the profane in the view of humanity. This separation and split was more emphasized in the post-Christian time.

#### Sexist Dualism

This dualism also has significant impact in the distorted understanding of human nature. Rosemary R. Ruether, one of the leading spokespersons in feminist theology, and author of New Woman New Earth, points out that "the dualistic view of the self and the world, the hierarchical concept of society, the relation of humanity... all these relationships have been modeled on sexual dualism."<sup>20</sup> In her other book, Sexism and God-Talk, Ruether refers to the ambiguity in the way the "imago dei" was correlated with maleness and femaleness. By this she means that although the equivalence of maleness and femaleness was affirmed in the notion of "imago dei," the femaleness (women) was associated with the lower self. The femaleness has never been denied, however, "it has tended to

---

<sup>20</sup> Rosemary R. Ruether, New Woman New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation (New York: Crossroad, 1975), 3.

become obscure by a second tendency to correlate femaleness with the lower part of human nature in a hierarchical scheme of mind over body, reason over passions."<sup>21</sup> This dualism basically refers to the way men and women relate to one another in a pattern of submission and domination. In other words, it is the subordination of women to men. This sort of dualism is also regarded as the result of the sinful alienation of self from God. Biblically speaking, this is the result of the fall. It is after the fall that the woman was ordered that her love will be for her husband. However, this is not what I want to emphasize here, rather, the focus of the discussion is the notion of subordination.

The sexist dualism was present in the Old Testament. In fact, I think it was first expressed in the patriarchal times, and it continued on in the Christian Church. Men assumed their superiority in reason and leadership and women were limited and associated with emotions and sensuality. This is also present in the Samoan situation. Historically there is recognition of the heroic contribution by the women in the community both in the past and in the present. At the present, the women still play an important role in society. However, by and large, there is still sexist dualism in the community practices. This kind of dualism has distorted our experience and understanding of ourselves

---

<sup>21</sup> Rosemary R. Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology (Boston: Beacon, 1983), 93.

as beings (sexual beings).

This framework of theological thinking raises some challenging issues in our approach to doing theology and how to cope with dualism in our educational task. One of the issues that this approach has addressed is the method of exploring theological issues. Nelson explored his subject from two different approaches, namely, the traditional approach (objective), and the sensual approach (subjective). In the traditional approach, the fundamental question that is usually asked is what does the Christian faith have to say about our lives as beings (sexual beings)? This approach entails looking objectively at the Christian faith and relating it to our daily life experience. The general emphasis in this approach focuses on the idea(s) or sets of principles that are appropriate for living. I have realized that this approach is very common in Western societies.

Nelson suggests another alternative. This approach entails exploring what our experience as (sexual) beings means in relation to the way in which we understand and attempt to live and exercise our faith. This approach addresses the feelings and the emotion (experience) and how they are related to the rational aspect of our faith.

Emphasizing only the traditional approach (objective approach) is an imbalanced way of dealing with our faith. In addition, such imbalance opens the door to dualism (reason from emotion). This suggests that doing theology

and educational ministry necessarily is an interface of these two approaches. "Faithing" is the interaction or the dialogical relationship of both the mind and the body (the mind and the experience).

Another issue of significant importance in this approach is the emphasis on recapturing of the sensual (body-self) aspect of understanding. This approach incorporates the sensual, observable, experiential, interactional processes of understanding faith. The West has been so preoccupied with the emphasis on the rational ability of the person that the sensual aspect of the "being" has been overlooked and rejected. Thus, a holistic understanding of the "real self" is distorted. This suggests that ideas, propositions, discourses are not of primary importance. Rather, what is important is that we should keep the two things (affective and cognitive) in balance. Both the sensual experience--the feeling and the affective aspect of knowing--and the cognitive dimension of knowing and understanding are necessary, and should not be separated.

Within this frame of reference, one will realize that this approach will enhance another perspective of talking about and knowing God. It will minimize the dichotomy of speaking about the "otherness" of God and the human being as body. Put in another way, it is the dualism of Holy other and the human. So the emphasis will not be the transcendent

God, but rather focus on the immanence of the Holy God in the sensual experience of the human being.

In the history of Christianity, sexist dualism was present throughout. It was present in the Hebrew history and was more so in the Greek Classic Age. The culture was clearly male dominated. Of course some female images were used to describe God but the male image was predominant. Hence, Nelson's approach suggests an alternative to minimize this sort of dualism. He affirms the ideal of the "androgynous" personality which unites or brings together the masculine and the feminine characteristics in one person, whether male or female.<sup>22</sup>

It should not be mistaken that "androgynous" is bisexuality or hermaphroditism. The point of emphasis here is the call to recognize both the feminine and the masculine in the individual person, and these aspects of the sensual experience are quite appropriate in exploring and expressing one's faith.

This writer does not find Nelson's ideal "androgynous personality" very convincing. However, the recognition of dualism and duality in this approach is significant for our task. It suggests that the duality be affirmed and dualism is to be rejected. Thus our task is not to transcend the male-female duality but reject dualism by finding an

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 97.

alternative for a harmonious interaction.

Unlike the Western mind-body split, the concept of "self" in the Samoan culture is more holistic. The body-spirit is a unity rather than a dualistic relationship where the mind is superior. Within this cultural context, "knowing" or understanding is not a rational head exercise of reasoning. Rather, it is a holistic approach to "knowing." It entails the affective, sensual experience of the individual. This is not suggesting that the Samoan are not rational. Of course they are rational beings. The point is that relationships, interaction, and the cooperative life experience is not first and foremost a set of ideas or propositions for discourse. Rather, it is a process that grows out of the sensual experience and builds around the corporate understanding of the community faith, life in general, and even the relationship to God. Thus, any educational approach that imposes and emphasizes rational propositions at the expense of the sensual, affective aspect of knowing and learning not only perpetuates dualism but also is an agent of distortion and alienation.

#### The Dualistic Understanding of Faith

One of the problems I have noticed in the so-called "missionary churches" which is common in the Pacific, including Samoa, is the dualistic understanding of faith. This writer suggests that this conflict has its root back in the colonial period. There is a continuous conflict in the

way the nature of faith is perceived. This conflict is rooted in the misconception between faith and reason. To some, reasoning is just a head exercise, and faith is a matter of the heart. To others, faith is the base and reason is just secondary. This kind of misconception creates a dichotomy of a superior and inferior understanding of faith. Further, it creates a dualistic notion of "rational" and "irrational" faith.

Martin Buber, in his book, Two Types of Faith, points out that there are only two types of faith. For Buber, the first type implies that a person can trust someone without offering sufficient reasons for that trust. The other implies that one acknowledges a thing to be true without giving sufficient reason.<sup>23</sup> This approach acknowledges that there are many contents of faith, however, one can only know faith in two basic forms. Thus, it suggests that it is appropriate and necessary for one to know faith in either of these forms. Buber raises the problem but he did not quite give an answer. His emphasis is on trust verses belief, addressing the way to structure the faith. However, I think Buber implies an interrelated understanding of faith.

Richard H. Niebuhr's approach to faith is more adequate in this situation and the context of this exercise. I find this approach more appropriate because it talks about the

---

<sup>23</sup> Martin Buber, Two Types of Faith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), 7.



issue of faith in a corporate interaction. In other words, this approach is relational, that there is a relational interaction in faith. In one of his books, Radical Monotheism and Western Culture, Richard Niebuhr discusses faith in the context of culture. He argues that in our human situation the problem of faith is very important. The main theme is that our whole culture is involved in a conflict of faiths. Niebuhr's main concern is the conflict in Western culture. This conflict is between what he calls "radical monotheism" and other "isms" like polytheism and henotheism.

"Radical monotheism" for Niebuhr is a form of human faith, that is, the confidence and fidelity without which we do not live.<sup>24</sup> We are confronted to choose between trust in the One beyond all things and giving ourselves to lesser loyalties. Thus, the conflict of faith is a call to place radical monotheism above the so-called pseudo-religions (other material interests and faiths). Radical monotheism proclaims that only one "value-center" (the One beyond the many) may be recognized, and faith, therefore, is the faith in this One (God) who is beyond any other value.

Understanding faith then in this approach is both subjective and objective. To understand faith and God, theology must attend both to the "God of faith," as well as

---

<sup>24</sup> Richard H. Niebuhr, Radical Monotheism and Western Culture (New York: Harper, 1943), 38.

the "faith in God."<sup>25</sup> Doing theology then entails participating in faith, to become one who exercises faith.

Faith and reason are two different things. However, they are not exclusive of each other. In faith, one begins with both (reason and faith). The base of such experience is faith, but reason and faith go together. In other words, it begins in faith, but reason is present in this faith rather than moving from reason to faith. This reasoning analyzes, compares, relates and interprets one's sense experience. Hence, in this framework, theology has a dual task. One of its tasks is to develop this reasoning in faith, while the other is to be a critic of faith.<sup>26</sup> This dual task involves developing the rational element in faith, as well as participating in the issues of faith and being involved in the life of faith.

During the missionary period, the main concern was focused on imparting the faith to the natives (Samoans) objectively. In fact, it was more of translating the content (subject matter) of faith. This traditional approach focuses more on asking the question what does the new faith (Western faith or God) say about the Samoan faith (situation). Any attempt to "know" the Samoan faith was overlooked and ignored. In order to know and understand the

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

Samoan faith or God, one needs to participate in the issues of faith and be involved in the life of faith within the cultural context of the community. Such approach to transmitting faith is not only both subjective and objective, but is relational, holistic and authentic to the Samoans.

#### The Dualistic Understanding of Faith as Trust and Loyalty

This aspect of faith is the fiducial or affective dimension of being in faith. The problem related to this dimension of faith is the tendency to separate trust and loyalty. Consequently, it creates a dualism, and a misconception of the nature of trust and loyalty. Trust and loyalty are interrelated not exclusive of each other.

This dimension of faith takes the form of a relationship of trust and confidence, and trust finds expression in loyalty, love, and attachment.<sup>27</sup> On one hand, trust is that which gives value to the self, but on the other hand it is loyalty to what the self values.<sup>28</sup> Faith, then, as trust and loyalty incorporates confidence, faithfulness and commitment. In this sense, faith is an invitation to a relationship of boundless trust in the faithfulness of God and the power of God's loving grace. This trust is the recognition of God's faithfulness and the

---

<sup>27</sup> Groome, 60.

<sup>28</sup> Niebuhr, 16.

reliance on God's power that induces us in reverence and wonder.

This aspect of trust in God's faithfulness and promises is a notable characteristic of understanding faith in the Old Testament. Norman Lamm in his book, Faith and Doubt, calls this activity "affective faith." "Affective faith is personal and emotional, bespeaking a sense of trust, reliance, dependence and hope."<sup>29</sup> This notion is also evident in the teaching of Paul; he speaks of faith as a total commitment in the trusting relationship with God (Rom. 4:18-25). Such relationship of trust and reliance in a personal God is the outcome of loyalty and confidence in a faithful God. This faithful God is the One whose oath of loyalty became flesh in Christ. Further, this God reveals in a relationship, an interpersonal relationship (revelation). Revelation then in this relationship is God giving God's self rather than proposition(s) about God. Put it in another way, this revelation has the reception that is shaped by confidence and loyalty.

#### The Theological Dualism and the Educational Enterprise

The educational task of the church has been predominantly influenced by the church's theologies. In other words, the theological perspective--assumptions of the

---

<sup>29</sup> Norman Lamm, Faith and Doubt: Studies in Traditional Jewish Thought (New York: KTAV, 1971), 8.

various theologians, educators, theorists--shape the nature and the practice of the educational ministry. The dualism, goals, strategies, methods, and the structures are built around the theology espoused for/in the educational practice(s).

### The Dualism of Human Nature and the Educational Task

The dualistic understanding of human nature imposes an imbalance approach to the educational task. The superiority of the mind (soul) in the body-self split (dualism) places the emphasis and the focus of education on the cognitive aspect. It prescribes an educational model that is geared towards the rational aspect of learning at the expense of the sensual, affective dimension of the educational process. Educational ministry is not exclusively the development of cognition. Feelings and experience are also important components of learning. Educationally, there is a great need to recapture the sensual, interactional dimension of learning and knowing. Thus, educational ministry should be holistic in its emphasis incorporating both the cognitive and sensual or affective dimension of education.

Another misconception that springs out of the soul and body dualism is a pessimistic view of the person or human. In this view, the human is portrayed to be totally depraved and helpless. This theological perspective is predominant in the theology of Calvin. Elsewhere, he portrayed the

human as totally depraved and incapable of any good thought and act, and so human is dependent on the grace of God. This theological emphasis was predominant in the teaching of the early missionaries in the Pacific. In fact, the missionaries who first came to the Pacific were Calvinists, Wesleyans, and Congregationalists. This theological understanding of human nature prescribes an educational task that focuses primarily on conversion, salvation, indoctrination. This traditional approach to educational ministry was not only characteristic of the missionary era, but is still the prevailing approach in Samoa. An educational approach that is more appropriate is one that integrates the positive and the negative aspect of humanity.

Further, a pessimistic and negative view of humanity (bodily or worldly matters) will lead to several forms of dualism in the educational ministry. These other forms of dualism will be discussed later in this section.

#### **The Misconception of Faith and the Educational Ministry**

The misconception of faith and its dimensions (belief, trust and loyalty, action) also has a direct impact on the educational task. Traditionally, the educational ministry is described as the activity of transmitting the Christian faith. In the words of H. Grimes, "Christian education is both the organized and the unstructured process by which the

Christian community attempts to transmit its faith...."<sup>30</sup>

Faith, as belief or believing, is the rational dimension of faith. In this sense, belief refers to the intellectual dimension as a particular rational description of doctrine. To explicate the faith requires cognitive claims to appropriate and make it meaningful in people's lives. However, to overemphasize this aspect of faith suggests creating an educational approach that is head oriented.

The other dimensions of faith are trust and doing or action. The trust dimension includes an attitude of confidence in a personal relationship and the loyalty to the cause of one's faith. The "doing" aspect of faith is simply the response to God's will. It is the doing of what is known. This act of doing is expressed and embodied in a lifestyle of love. This is the implication of the great commandment; it is loving God by loving others (Mark 12:30-31).

Further, the notion of faith as doing has a radical implication for educational ministry in the context of liberation theology. I shall discuss this in detail in a later chapter. However, in this context, faith as action implies transformation. Gustavo Gutierrez, an outstanding Latin American theologian, the author of A Theology of

---

<sup>30</sup> Howard Grime, "Theological Foundation for Christian Education," An Introduction to Christian Education, ed. M. J. Taylor (New York: Abingdon, 1960), 32.

Liberation, writes, "commitment [to liberation] gives rise to a new way of being man and a believer, of living and thinking faith, of being called together in an 'ecclesia.'"<sup>31</sup> The centrality of doing faith in here means promoting the cause of justice and liberation. Hence, in the educational task, to overemphasize one aspect of faith is an imbalance approach, focusing the concept and oversimplifying the issue. Educationally, teaching faith incorporates the intellectual dimension, trusting aspect and involves participating actively (doing) to bring about peace and justice.

#### The Sexist Dualism and the Educational Task

The impact of the sexist dualism in the educational ministry involves not only the way we perceive and conceptualize God, but it will also influence the language we employ to talk theologically about God (predominantly male imagery). In the West, the masculine pronoun (he) is predominantly used to refer to God. Whereas in traditional societies like Samoa, the personal pronoun for God is inclusive and can be used both as masculine or feminine. Further, Western Anglo (missionary) speaks of the One God but far away from shared trust and unity. In a traditional

---

<sup>31</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, "Liberation, Theology and Proclamation," The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith, eds., G. Gutierrez and C. Geffre, (New York: Herder, 1974), 58.



culture like Samoan, they have many gods or faiths but have unity, and a holistic understanding of the relationship to society. The educational task in the sexist situation in the Samoan church calls to enhance and foster copartners and co-creators in the issues of life.

### The Impact of Dualism on the Traditional Theological

#### Approach to Educational Ministry

Evidently, the theological dualism(s) has shaped the aim and the educational task of the missionary era. The practice of educational ministry of this period is primarily rooted in the traditional theological approach. It has portrayed the goal of educational ministry as primarily the transmission of the message of salvation. The authoritative message is found in the Bible which is regarded as the only source of authoritative revelation. This theological conceptualization is the foundation on which all the aspects of the educational ministry in this particular approach are defined and prescribed. Within the Protestant tradition this approach is predominant among the Evangelical.<sup>32</sup> Basically the espoused theory in this approach is that the best way to live and defend the Christian faith is knowing the right answers. So the method employed for the educational task is the teacher explaining the lesson and

---

<sup>32</sup> "Evangelical" in this sense refers to the school of thinking that emphasizes the authority of the scriptures, not a reference to a different denomination.

the children learning it by rote memorization. This method was quite common in the early period of the Sunday School movement.<sup>33</sup> The assumption in this prevailing theory is that when the student is able to memorize and repeat what is true and right, then s/he will believe the truth and so do the right thing.

One of the proponents of this approach is Frank Gaebelein. Theologically, Gaebelein claims that the fundamentals of the educational ministry are doctrines found in the Bible.<sup>34</sup> For Gaebelein, the heart of the educational ministry is primarily communication of the Christian (biblical) truths to the children. Educationally, the emphasis here is the verbal teaching of the Scriptures by the teachers.

In her book, Education That Is Christian, Lois Le Bar a contemporary of Frank Gaebelein, articulates this approach to educational ministry. Lois Le Bar espouses that the foundation for educational ministry should be theological and biblical. By this she means that educational concept, method, and curriculum are divinely inspired and derived from the Bible, rather than relying on other secular sources

---

<sup>33</sup> Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright, The Big Little School (New York: Harper, 1971), 117-145

<sup>34</sup> Frank E. Gaebelein, Christian Education in a Democracy (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), 20, 227-28.

for information.<sup>35</sup> There is an implicit assumption here that divine inspiration (Holy Spirit) will work through the teacher to achieve the educational task. This leads us to the next issue that is determined and influenced by the dualism, namely the "aim(s)" in the educational ministry.

**The Impact of Dualism on the Aim(s) of  
Educational Ministry**

One of the prevailing questions in the educational ministry is, what determines the aim of the educational task? Put another way, what is educational ministry all about? For the traditional theological school of thought, the aim of educational ministry is determined by divine purpose. It implies that it is divinely inspired and derived from revealed truth.<sup>36</sup> In this model, though, there is concern and interest in humanity and society in general. However, the ultimate concern is divinely directed (from beyond). Thus, educational ministry is the communication of the divine message. In short, it is the transmission of the Christian message, the impartation of the salvific message.

Some advocates of this model espouse that the transmissive aspect of aim should not be equated with a dogmatic transferring of knowledge. Nevertheless, their theory-in-use implicitly indicates transmission of the

---

<sup>35</sup> Lois Le Bar, Education That Is Christian (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1958), 49-52

<sup>36</sup> Gaebelstein, 259.

gospel to be associated with "right belief," knowledge of the Bible, character formation, right living, conversion. Historically, the Sunday School educational task emphasizes Christian living as the by-product of the knowledge of the Bible and of a conversion experience.<sup>37</sup> The pioneers of the missionary movement to Samoa were advocates of this school of thought. Further, another aspect of the aim of educational ministry in this model focuses in the hereafter, a futuristic dimension of participation in the life eternal (Kingdom of God). Theologically, this implies that Christian living is encouraged in this world but the ultimate fulfillment of redemption, salvation, and the Kingdom of God is an event and activity in another world beyond (supernatural or otherworldly expectation).

#### The Impact of Dualism on the Content and Method

As the result of theological dualism, the key element in determining the content of the educational ministry in the traditional approach is the divine, authoritative, and biblically constructed message that is to be imparted to the students. The criterion for this is the Bible. The content or the subject matter is drawn directly from the Bible. The theological position that is associated with this selection is a conviction that the only authentic and infallible

---

<sup>37</sup> Harold W. Burgess, An Invitation to Religious Education (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1975), 33.

source for educational ministry is the Bible. This writer is not disregarding the effort of the traditionalists to utilize other sources. However, there is almost a strong exclusive demand for biblical materials to be the core content (subject matter) of the educational task. Life experience, social situation and experience,<sup>38</sup> relationship and interaction are considered the content of the educational ministry. Further, the educational ministry incorporates God, learner, world (life in general) as the content of the educational task.

Conversely, this approach limits the educational practice to a Bible or content-centered exercise. Thus, disregarding the significance of the educative process (education is an end in itself), as well as failure to recognize the importance of the learner (learner centered approach) in the educational task. Educational ministry necessarily takes into account the importance of the process in education as well as special recognition of the learner's potentials and experience. Any educational program that fails to recognize these aspects is not complete educational ministry in the true sense of the word. More will be said on these aspects of the educational task in the next chapter.

There is a danger in overemphasizing the impartation of

---

<sup>38</sup> George Albert Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education (New York: Scribner, 1917), 5-9, 13-24.

the content or knowledge in the educational task. The content-oriented method usually turns out to prescribe the narration dimension of education. "Education is suffering from narration sickness."<sup>39</sup> Briefly, narrative education has been distorted by the wrong practice whereby the teacher is the "narrator" (imparting the subject matter) and the learners are expected to memorize the content. This issue will be discussed in detail later in the project. Paulo Freire refers to this model as the root of the "banking method." However, the content-centered model of education associates "truth(s)" with the transmission of a body of content or the subject matters.<sup>40</sup> Educationally, this creates a dualism and dichotomy between the transmissive aspect of teaching and the other approaches such as the "creative" (problem solving) aspect of the educational task.<sup>41</sup> Educational ministry constructively incorporates all aspects of the teaching-learning process in its task. The method employed to transmit the faith should also be socially oriented, and involve participation in real life situation. Education (teaching) begins with the person(s)

---

<sup>39</sup> Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 57.

<sup>40</sup> Harold C. Mason, The Teaching Task of the Local Church (Winona, Ind.: Life & Life, 1960), 25.

<sup>41</sup> The educational dimension of the educational ministry is discussed in detail in the next chapter. However, for clarification at this point, "problem-solving" treats the learner as the subject rather than an object in the educational task. The learner is involved in the teaching-learning process.

not subject matter.

### Dualism and the Teacher-Learner Relationship

It is evident that theological dualism has an impact on the content, method of educational ministry, but it also influences the teacher-learner relationship. This is quite obvious in the traditional theological approach. In this approach there is a superior image of the teacher, while the learner is inferior. The assumption is that the teacher is the one that first receives the salvific message and thus is able to translate and transmit the salvific message to the learner.<sup>42</sup> The teacher then is the sole agent who passes on the message with authority, conviction, and fidelity. This image depicts the teacher as Mr. or Ms. "Know All." The "helping" relationship implied in this point of view is filling the head of the learner with facts like filling an empty container. The teacher is also a learner, the one who guides and participate with the learner in the teaching-learning process.

On the other end of the scale is the learner. The traditional theological approach portrays the learner as the passive recipient of the word (salvific word). The image of the learner is an inferior, helpless, hopeless "being" ("thing") whose future is at the mercy of the teacher for salvation from ignorance and intellectual chaos. How else

---

<sup>42</sup> Burgess, 21.

can you spell dualism? This is a distorted theological and educational view of the educational ministry. The learner is not an object but is the "Subject" in the educational task.<sup>43</sup> The learner participates and can develop out of his or her own resources, and has the capacity and the ability to learn, transform and reconstruct. The educational ministry provides opportunities for the teacher and student to be "co-learners" in the issues and matters of faith and life in general.

#### Summary

Theological dualism imbedded in the Church's theology has shaped the form and structure of the educational ministry of the Samoan churches. This is quite evident in most missionary churches (like Samoa) which receive all their knowledge from the missionary movement, whose primary aim is conversion, smashing of the native gods. The unresolved Western theological dualism was implanted in the fabric of the educational ministry in the islands. No doubt the missionary movement had a genuine motive for its task. However, what they espoused and the strategy they employed were not always congruent. Consequently, it created other forms of dualism and some misconceptions in the practice of educational ministry.

---

<sup>43</sup> Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 54, 74.



The Samoans were always religious people before the arrival of Christianity. They were familiar with religious practices, and even theological thinking was not something peculiar to foreign practices. Their relationships to their native god(s), people, world was theologically oriented. Community and relationship is central in their cultural and religious practices. They have a holistic view of life and what it entails. Western Christianity (technology and civilization as well) was introduced as that which would be good for the natives. Apparently, theological dualism was at the core of this new religion.

Among the many forms of dualism is the one that is directly related to the view of the human nature. The classical understanding of the person (human) is that it is made up of body and soul, and the two are separate. The soul is regarded as good, immortal, the seat of reason; while the body is mortal and evil. The assumption here is that the soul will never fully develop because it is associated with the body. Hence, anything associated with the body is supposed to be evil. Out of this school of thought evolves a negative and pessimistic view that the human is depraved and incapable of any good thought and act. This point of view is quite noticeable in some of the Protestant theologies, particularly those with a strong Calvin and pietistic Wesleyan background. The pioneer missionaries that came to the South Seas were from this

theological background (LMS and the WMS).

The "spiritualistic dualism" is one of the main forms of dualism. This is the split between the spirit and the body. The so-called "real self" is regarded as immaterial and incorporeal. This kind of philosophical and theological orientation was prominent in the Greek culture. Christianity began to blossom during this period. Thus, its theology has been influenced by this kind of theological orientation.

The "sexist dualism" has also distorted the Church's theology, because it encourages subordination and submission, emphasizing the male imagery to conceptualize God, and as the dominant figure between the male and female. This was present in the time of the Old Testament, and more so in the Greek classical age and the early church. Theology seeks to promote and foster our understanding of God and others in a holistic way. Our task is to seek ways to enhance harmonious interaction not perpetuating dualism.

The dualism present in the way the nature of faith is perceived raises some conflicting views. It is rooted in the misconception between faith and reason, between faith as belief, faith as trust and loyalty, and faith as action. Faith and reason are not exclusive of each other, though they are two different things. In faith, one begins in both (faith and reason). Reason is present in faith in that it analyzes, compares, relates and interprets one's faith

experience.

Faith as believing implies the cognitive, rational, intellectual dimension as a particular rational description of doctrine. This is only one aspect of faith. Faith as trust and loyalty is the fiducial or affective dimension of being in faith. It entails the confidence and finds expression in loyalty and commitment. Further, faith as action or doing, implies that one participates in faith, living and acting out faith. Faith as doing involves participating actively to bring peace and justice to our world. So, faith has a triadic dimension, and all these aspects are inseparable.

The impact of dualism in the educational task is quite obvious. To claim the superiority of the mind over the body suggests an educational approach that is rational, cognitive oriented. This approach assumes that knowing the right answers is the best way to live and defend the Christian faith. Thus, educationally, learning is by rote memorization. Education is more than memorization. It is both cognitive and sensual, both objective and subjective. The aim should entail both the transmitting and a critical reflection on faith.

Furthermore, the effect of dualism in the educational ministry makes us become more realistic in facing the limitations and difficulties both in our theological conceptualization and the educational process. It

challenges us to look critically on the how, why, when, and where of the educational practice and its theological implications. Regardless of the dualism, there is optimism and confidence that Christian nurture and growth can take place, and educational ministry facilitates this change. Facilitating such change involves overhauling our task, purpose and practice, maximizing and utilizing the learner's potentialities in the educational process. This calls for a holistic approach to the educational enterprise. Both the teacher and the learner are coworkers, co-learners, co-creators in the educational ministry. Such ministry necessarily requires a good and firm educational foundation, which is the theme of the next chapter.

### CHAPTER 3

## Toward a Theoretical Foundation of Educational Ministry

### Introduction

A theoretical foundation of educational ministry necessarily has to be relevant to the situation where it is practiced. It should take into account not only the foundation of faith, but also the context of our time, and the appropriate method(s).

The intention of this chapter is to discuss a theoretical foundation of educational ministry with a particular focus on the situation in Samoa. The issue at hand is that lack of critical consciousness in the theoretical foundation of educational ministry creates a misconception of the educational task.

The thesis addressed in this chapter is that raising critical consciousness of the educational task and the dimensions of the educational practice will provide guidelines for implementation and reconstruction of educational ministry.

The first focus will be on the discussion of a theological foundation, drawn from the work of Randolph C. Miller whose emphasis is theology. The second, socialization and the educational ministry, will focus

mainly on the work of John Westerhoff, who is the leading spokesperson of this approach. The next section will discuss the issue of "educational praxis," and will use the works of Groome and Freire. These theorists were selected on the basis of their themes and objectives, because their work can contribute in constructing appropriate guidelines in the task called for in Samoa. A summary of the work of the theorists will be outlined in a chart form.

### Theological Foundation

The educational ministry must definitely have a clear and well-developed foundation, if it is to remain faithful to its task and purpose. One of the necessary themes for this task is theology. This means constructing a theoretical approach that is not only theologically oriented, but such theology should be congruent and consistent with the proposed task in the educational enterprise.

The ministry of the church had gone through some transitional period, facing crises with regard to the nature and practice of educational ministry. One of the significant events that took place during this period (1930-40) was the debate between H. Elliott and H. S. Smith. It was a debate between the liberals and the neoorthodox. The liberals rejected a return to the neoorthodox approach. They thought of this as a return to orthodoxy. This debate did not solve any problem. However, it raised a lot of

interest and concerns, and it has had a great impact in religious education ever since.

### Problematic

Randolph C. Miller, a long-time editor of Religious Education and author of The Clue to Christian Education, suggests that the problem in the educational ministry is the lack of theology. Miller defines theology as the "truth-about-God-in relation to man."<sup>1</sup> The answer to the problem of the educational ministry is found in a particular way in theology. For Miller, this was also the answer to the issue raised by Elliott and Smith. What is missing in most educational schemes today is theology: therefore, theology should be at the center.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that theology provides the perspective for the subject(s) but the subject(s) are to be taught in terms of the interest and capacities of the learners. Thus, the objectives, theory and methods of educational ministry need to be undergirded and altered by a more self-conscious theological reconstruction.

Conversely, the answer to the educational problem(s) lies in the proper interpretation of theology. This implies that if the clue to education is not in the content, then theology is definitely not in the center. "Theology must be

---

<sup>1</sup> Miller, The Clue to Christian Education, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

prior to the curriculum."<sup>3</sup> Let it not be mistaken that this is not suggesting a return to the content-centered approach or the indoctrination method. It was made clear earlier that the emphasis on content and indoctrination leads to memorization and verbalism as well as manipulation and authoritarianism. Rather, the concern is about the relation of the content of the Christian faith and the best creative methods of teaching. This concern surfaces the kind of errors that educators frequently made. On one hand, the method that is generally used is an end in itself. On the other hand, the content of what is taught is the product of some unrevised dated doctrine. Thus, there is a need for doing theology constructively as well as the need to relate the content to method in an organic whole.

Miller points out in The Clue that there has been a continuous dissatisfaction with the content teaching and a distrust of the life-centered teaching. The weakness is the failure to grasp the purpose of the Christian education and to impart Christian truth.<sup>4</sup> What is implied here is the concern that our philosophy of educational method has been sound at the expense of theology (content). This means that theology has been presented without the methods to bring it to life in the experience of the learners. Thus, "the major

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 2.



task of Christian education today is to discover and impart the relevance of Christian truth."<sup>5</sup> This is not suggesting that teaching theology should be the primary task of educational ministry. Rather, educational ministry necessarily needs to use theology as the basic tool for the educational task. It is through this process that brings the learner to a relationship with God and others. "The purpose of Christian education is to place God at the center and to bring the individual into the right relationship with God and his fellows with the perspective of the fundamental Christian truths about all of life."<sup>6</sup> This proposes that when the relationship between content and method is achieved, theology becomes relevant to life.

All this means that theology points in the direction of Christian answer. It involves pointing toward the relationship between God and people, and this relationship entails the integration of the total personality in relation to God. In the words of Miller:

The Clue to Christian education is the discovery of a relevant theology which will bridge the gap between content and method providing the background and the perspective of Christian truth by which the best methods and content will be used as tool to bring the learner into the right relationship with the living God who is revealed in Christ, using the guidance of parents and the fellowship of life in the church as the environment in which Christian nurture will take

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 8.

place.<sup>7</sup>

The basic theological assumption in all these is that God is involved in the process of our lives, and that faith is a relationship of trust. Further, when theology is made meaningful to life, it will point towards our relationship with God as well as to others. In short, the emphasis is relating theology to life.

#### The Source of the Theological Orientation

There are various sources that one can utilize for doing theology of educational ministry. For example, one can begin with history, tradition, culture and experience, and deduce from them the theological principles for the educational task. The most important source that contains all of these is the Bible. It is in the Bible where people find a special revelation. The Bible gives us the picture of God in relation to the people, the world. In this concrete sense, theology is the organizing principle for the educational task.

In his book Biblical Theology and Christian Education, Miller continues to emphasize the centrality of theology, but he moves further into the field of biblical theology. The Bible is the chief source of theology for the church.<sup>8</sup> It is the record of God's act and human response in history.

---

<sup>7</sup> Miller, The Clue to Christian Education, 15.

<sup>8</sup> R. C. Miller, Biblical Theology and Christian Education (New York: Scribner, 1956), 15.

The Bible tells the story, called "the drama of redemption."<sup>9</sup> Educationally, we need some methods for relating and transmitting the meaning as well as the relevance of the Bible for people of all ages. For Miller, the "drama of redemption" is relevant to all ages. The chief actor in the historical drama of redemption is God.<sup>10</sup> This theological orientation, this story that the Bible tells, can be made significant to both young and old through meaningful relationships, encounters and interactions, and through experience.

#### Theology and Educational Ministry

Theology is about God, humanity, the world, and life in general. It incorporates the significance of all of these for meaningful living. In this context, theology is the source of our knowledge of God, understanding of life and also provides guidance for our ministry. Thus, theology provides both the content and the method(s) for the educational task. In this sense (Christian) theology is the primary source for the theory and procedure of educational ministry. Theology provides the answer to humanity's basic existential questions. Hence, educational ministry seeks to provide opportunity for growth, for healing and for transformation. For theology to be relevant to educational

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

ministry, we need to see its significance for people of all levels. This calls for educational ministry to approach its task from a theological base and that theology should be reflected in its objectives, theories, and methods. Too often theories for educational ministry have begun from a secular viewpoint with theology as a footnote to the secular perspective. It is our purpose to reverse this procedure and to use all secular insights as tools within the framework of Christian faith.<sup>11</sup> Thus, educational ministry necessarily needs a sound theological foundation.

Theology is relevant to life. It provides insights to understanding of people, relationship with God and with each other. "God works through persons in relationship. God stands in the center, and we are to use every means at our disposal to bring individuals into the right relationship with God and their fellows within the fellowship of the church."<sup>12</sup>

Nurturing is another aspect of the educational ministry. This nurturing aspect involves persons in the activity and relationships of Christian community. It involves what Horace Bushnell called "the organic unity of

---

<sup>11</sup> R. C. Miller, Education for Christian Living (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1956), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 66.

the family"<sup>13</sup> and the community of the church. "Christian education is the nurture of the total person in all the relationships of life seen from the perspective of membership in the Christian community. This is a program from womb to tomb."<sup>14</sup> Worship is also an important aspect of the educational ministry. "The worship of the church is educational, and it is the vital element in the spiritual growth of the members of the parish."<sup>15</sup> It is evident that educational ministry takes place in a Christian community.

#### Theology and the Language of Educational Ministry

Educational ministry is not primarily teaching of theology. Hence, our language in educational ministry should be understood by everyone rather than just by an elite group. We should be concerned with the use and meaning of language for the purpose of Christian education.<sup>16</sup> "Further, we are to deal with the key problem of how to talk about God, as this issue is illuminated by our understanding of how religious language works."<sup>17</sup> However, in the educational task, the teacher must be able

---

<sup>13</sup> Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 90-122.

<sup>14</sup> R. C. Miller, Christian Nurture and the Church (New York: Scribner, 1961), vii.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>16</sup> R. C. Miller, The Language Gap and God (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970), xiv.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

to move from theological language to the language of the lay people. One needs to use the language that is familiar to the student.

#### Theory and Practice of Educational Ministry

One of the pitfalls in the educational ministry is the inadequate theory for the educational practice. There is always the conflict of whether one needs to start with the theory or with the practice. Educationally, our theory should guide practice and practice should inform and reform theory. Definitely, what is needed today is a theory and practice intimately related to all modern life conditions. "Christian education is a theological discipline and method. Theology must always be in dialogue with educational theory and practice."<sup>18</sup>

In sum, educational ministry begins with the conviction that the church has a Gospel and that education begins when we are confronted by it. The source for the educational ministry is primarily theology. It is God who is the center of the educational ministry. Our task is to bring people into fellowship and intimate relationship with God, as well as others. Everyone should be confronted with Christ, so that they will place their trust in God through Christ. Educational ministry entails as its goal Christian maturity and human transformation. The educational ministry is done

---

<sup>18</sup> R.C. Miller, The Theory of Christian Education Practice (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1980), 2.

within a social process, and within a Christian community. The Christian community is the Christian home and the church.

### Socialization and Educational Ministry

Another approach to a theoretical foundation of educational ministry is the "socialization" or "enculturation" model. This model is associated with the name John Westerhoff III. He has popularized this approach and has continued recommending it for religious education. However, it was C. Ellis Nelson who first introduced socialization in Christian becoming in theoretical writings.<sup>19</sup>

#### Proponents of the Socialization Model

C. Ellis Nelson, a former president and professor of Christian Education at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and author of Where Faith Begins, analyzes the socialization process from the field of social science (anthropology and sociology).<sup>20</sup> By this I mean he focuses and concentrates on the means by which culture is transmitted in order to examine the transmission of Christian faith. In his analysis he finds that "culture ... is communicated through a socialization process... establishes a perceptive system... forms a conscience...

---

<sup>19</sup> C. Ellis Nelson, Where Faith Begins (Richmond: John Knox, 1971), 35-150.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

creates a self-identification out of personal relations within a social group."<sup>21</sup> These aspects of the socialization process, I believe, are at the heart of becoming a Christian. "Religion at its deepest levels is located within a person's sentiment and is the result of the way he was socialized by the adults...."<sup>22</sup> Within this framework, it is clear that the agent for transmitting Christian faith is a Christian community. The role of such a faith community is to incubate faith through worship, enhance the faith through fellowship, and seek ways to make faith meaningful.<sup>23</sup> In this context, everything that the Church does is educational. Thus, educational ministry nurtures the faith community's corporate life together as well as being the Church in the world.

Another name that has influenced and impacted the socialization approach to education is George A. Coe. He was very much influenced by liberal theology, as well as the Social Gospel movement. It is in this background that his work as a Protestant (religious education) theorist has emerged. Generally speaking, Coe is a reconstructionist in his approach. According to Coe, "Christian education... is a systematic, critical examination and reconstruction of

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 102-20.



relations between persons...."<sup>24</sup> This emphasis on education as reconstruction and the individual's participation reflects Dewey's influence on Coe. Coe is convinced that education should be a social interaction process. This implies that the whole social network in society has an educational aspect. In his book, A Social Theory of Religious Education, Coe points out that "the central fact of the educative process is a growing Christian experience in and through the pupils social interactions."<sup>25</sup> Further, he believes that "the primary `content of the curriculum' is to be found in present relations and interactions between persons."<sup>26</sup> It is perfectly clear in this sense that the process of social interaction is at the heart of Christian education. It is through social interaction and reconstruction that the church's educational ministry will further the "democracy of God."<sup>27</sup> Within this frame of reference, educational ministry deals not only with the quality of (family and community) life, but also with the reform and reconstruction of the whole social network.

---

<sup>24</sup> George A. Coe, What is Christian Education? (New York: Scribner, 1929), 296.

<sup>25</sup> George A. Coe, A Social Theory, 80.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>27</sup> "Democracy of God" is Coe's aim of Christian education. This is the term he substitutes for Kingdom of God.

John Westerhoff, professor of Christian Education at Duke University, is the leading spokesperson today of the socialization model in religious education. Westerhoff defines religious socialization as "a process consisting of lifelong formal and informal mechanisms, through which persons sustain and transmit their faith (world-view, value system) and life-style."<sup>28</sup> It is through participation in the life of a community in which this is achieved and accomplished. In other words, faith is transmitted and sustained by participating in the ritual, rites and other religious activities of the faith community. "Faith can only be nurtured within a self-conscious intentional community of faith."<sup>29</sup> To Westerhoff, we need to learn how to maximize religious socialization and move away from the traditional schooling approach. This is a call for a shift in paradigm for religious education.

#### The Problematic

According to Westerhoff, the problematic with religious education is the schooling paradigm. For him, "the schooling-instructional paradigm is bankrupt."<sup>30</sup> Thus, he suggests that we must shift in our practice and thinking about the church's ministry of education.

---

<sup>28</sup> Westerhoff and Neville, Generation to Generation, 41.

<sup>29</sup> John Westerhoff III, Will Our Children Have Faith? (New York: Seabury, 1976), 52.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 23.

The rationale for a paradigmatic shift is based on the assumption that faith cannot be taught by means of instruction. This implies that faith is nurtured but only religion is taught. Further, faith is shared and it cannot be given to a person from and by another. From this perspective, Westerhoff concludes that an alternative paradigm is needed. This alternative paradigm is the "faith-enculturation paradigm."

In Generation to Generation, Westerhoff recommends "intentional religious socialization" as the most effective process and approach to religious education.<sup>31</sup> Later in his other writings he refers to this process as "enculturation."<sup>32</sup> "Enculturation is a natural process of formal and informal, intentional and unintentional means by which persons are integrated into a social group and acquire its culture, that is, its learned, shared understanding and ways of life."<sup>33</sup> Here I believe Westerhoff is espousing that religious socialization (enculturation) becomes education by becoming more intentional. One cannot too hastily equate "religious education" with "intentional religious socialization."

It is evident that through the "enculturation" process,

---

<sup>31</sup> Westerhoff and Neville, Generation to Generation, 42.

<sup>32</sup> Westerhoff, Will Our Children have Faith?, 80.

<sup>33</sup> J. Westerhoff, "Formation, Education, Instruction." Religious Education 82 no. 4 (Fall 1987): 584.

particularly in the religious ceremonial activities, that one is introduced to the faith community. Here, the emphasis is on the role of catechesis. Basically, catechesis is Christian nurture.<sup>34</sup> Catechesis consists of two processes, namely formation and education.<sup>35</sup> The emphasis is on Christian formation through liturgy, ritual, and symbol.<sup>36</sup> One of the aspects of the life of the Church that has formative influence of the Christian formation is "worship." It is in and through worship that the people ritualize and celebrate the church's faith together. "By uniting learning and liturgy, Christian education could be enhanced; more important, our faith could be transmitted to our children."<sup>37</sup>

One of the important aspects of this approach is the author's contention to view religious education as "intentional religious socialization." Education is an intentional process. The socialization approach is a holistic approach. Socialization is not peculiar to the West, not a Western model. It is an indigenous approach. It is also a Samoan model. The people were introduced and

---

<sup>34</sup> J. Westerhoff, Living the Christian Faith (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 85.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Westerhoff and Neville, Learning Through Liturgy (New York: Seabury, 1979), chapters 2-7.

<sup>37</sup> Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith?, 58.

initiated into the culture in and through the socialization process. However, it was people like C. E. Nelson and Westerhoff who constructed this approach and made it a proper theoretical educational model.

### The Educational Praxis Approach

The theme "educational praxis" was introduced in theoretical writings, particularly in America, by Paulo Freire in his book The Pedagogy of the Oppressed. In this book he introduces a radical approach to education (liberation) for preliterate South Americans. Freire's model will be discussed in detail later in this section. Stimulated and influenced by Freire, Thomas Groome, professor of Religious Education at Boston College and author of Christian Religious Education, developed and introduced this process in the Christian education enterprise.

### The Shared Christian Praxis Approach

In Christian Religious Education, Groome discusses the six foundational questions "what, why, where, how, when, and who" of Christian religious education.<sup>38</sup> As a result, Groome proposes the "Shared Christian Praxis" approach.<sup>39</sup> This educational model is proposed as theologically and educationally adequate, and can be used in a variety of

---

<sup>38</sup> Groome, xiv.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 184-206.

settings as well as with different age groups.

Groome defines "Christian religious education" as

a political activity with the pilgrims in time that deliberately and intentionally attends with them to the activity of God in our present, to the Story of the Christian faith community, and to the Vision of God's kingdom, the seed of which are already among us.<sup>40</sup>

Within the context of this statement, it is evident that the end of Christian religious education activity for Groome is the Kingdom of God. The learners are described as "pilgrims in time," seeking to respond to the love and will of God.

As "pilgrims in time" we are involved in a faith journey. This faith has a triadic essential dimensions. It has a cognitive dimension, an affective dimension, and a "doing" or action dimension.<sup>41</sup> These constitutive dimensions are interrelated in the "faithing" process. They are interdependent in the "activity of knowing." Groome calls this process the "praxis way of knowing." By this he means that the praxis way of knowing" is a relational, reflective, and experiential way of knowing in which by critical reflection on lived experience people discover and name their own story and vision."<sup>42</sup> In faith, the cognitive, affective and doing dimensions cannot be separated. This suggests that "praxis" is not done in a

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 56-81.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 149.

vacuum, not a private phenomenon. Praxis happens in a social context, it takes place in a social community and environment. This implies that Christian religious education takes place whenever people get together "sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith."<sup>43</sup>

Within this framework, Groome suggests five movements in the shared Christian praxis. The first movement is "present action." This is naming the present action, the recognition of one's present situation and expressing one's "being" in the world. The second movement is "critical reflection." It is the participant's story and visions. This involves a dialogue. The third movement is the telling of the "Christian community story and vision." It is the sharing of the faith handed down to us, and bringing people to realize the meaning of the faith. The fourth movement is the "dialogue (dialectical hermeneutic) between the Story and the participants' stories." This is the process of appropriation, inviting the person to appropriate the Story to one's own life. The fifth and final movement is the dialogue between the Christian Vision and the participants' vision. This is inviting the participants for a response and calling them into decision. In short, the shared

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 184.

Christian praxis invites the people to live the Christian faith.

### Paulo Freire and Praxis

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian, is the most well-known proponent of a praxis approach to education. His early life experience and the situation among his people was the platform for his theoretical writings. In fact, one can never completely understand praxis without reading Freire's work.

Freire realized that "the ignorance and the lethargy of his people were the outcome of the political, social, economic domination--and of the paternalism--of which they are victims."<sup>44</sup> One of the instruments that fostered this situation was the educational system.<sup>45</sup> Freire's praxis grew out of his literacy programs with the illiterate people in the northern part of Brazil.

### Problematic

The problem that is addressed by Freire is the "Banking" educational model. For Freire this method is a way of adapting the people to a society which he found to be rigidly stratified and dehumanizing. In other words, this problem is rooted in the political, economic system of his time.

---

<sup>44</sup> Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 11.



### The Banking Model

According to Freire, the "banking" concept of education is an instrument of oppression. "Education is suffering from narration sickness."<sup>46</sup> This means that the banking concept does not admit partnership between the teacher and the student. "The banking concept of education which serves the interests of oppression is also necrophilic... it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power."<sup>47</sup>

Freire is calling for emancipation. This is a call for education toward liberation. Put it in another way, it is education for liberation. For Freire, "liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men [people] upon their world in order to transform it."<sup>48</sup> He suggests the problem-solving as an alternative, and the dialogical aspect of education which will be discussed in detail later. However, when the "banking model" and the "problem-solving model" are analyzed, they come into conflict. For example, the banking model mythicizes reality, resists dialogue, and treats students as objects. The problem-solving model sets itself the task of demythologizing, encourages dialogue, and makes

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 66.

(students) critical thinkers.<sup>49</sup>

### Assumptions

Freire's approach to education is grounded on some philosophical assumptions, as well as some theological presuppositions. His basic assumption is that "man's ontological vocation is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively."<sup>50</sup> This means that the basic human vocation is humanization. The world is not static, our task is to transform the world and the emancipation of humanity which has been dehumanized by cultural and social forms of oppression.

The other assumption is based on the conviction that "every human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the 'culture of silence' he [she] may be, is capable of looking critically at his [her] world in a dialogical encounter with others."<sup>51</sup> This assumption suggests an optimistic view of human nature that people are capable of changing reality and life situation(s). "Men educate each other through the meditations of the world."<sup>52</sup> We can act

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 71-2.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>51</sup> Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 13.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 13.

as agents to change and transform our world and society.

Another assumption that is clear in Freire's thought is that a neutral education is an impossibility. Put in another way, education is never neutral. In one of the interviews with Freire, he states:

it is impossible to have the neutrality of education just as it is impossible, for example, to have the neutrality of science. It means that no matter if we are conscious or not as educators, our praxis is either for the liberation of man - their humanization, or for their domestication - their domination.<sup>53</sup>

This always has political consequences, either making the people conform or it will liberate and promote transformation.

Freire has been described by some as a "Christian humanist," and the roots of his humanism are religious, more specifically Christian and Catholic.<sup>54</sup> Elsewhere he affirms a transcendent Being, God, and speaks of human relationship to this being as central to his view of human and the world. In his famous "A Letter to a Theology Student," Freire refers to the dynamic of God symbol which underlines his social criticism. He states, "The word of God is inviting me to recreate the world, ... liberation ... The word of

---

<sup>53</sup> "Education for Awareness: A Talk with Paulo Freire," [Interview] Risk 6, no. 4 (1970): 7.

<sup>54</sup> John L. Elias, Studies in Theology and Education (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger, 1986), 112.

God... saves, the Word liberates...."<sup>55</sup> From this perspective, Freire argues that a liberating education is necessary to bring about social and political revolution.

### Conscientization and Paulo Freire

The term "conscientization" is associated with the name Freire. He has utilized the term "conscientization" to refer to the development of critical awareness, achieved through dialogical educational programs associated with social and political responsibility.<sup>56</sup> Conscientization includes being aware and conscious of one's history, sociological situation, seriously questioning life situations, raising critical consciousness about life and society at large.

Conscientization also refers to commitment. It implies a historical commitment in time, because "conscientization" is a critical insertion into history. It means that people take on a role as subject making the world, remaking the world. Commitment entails involvement in society and in the world. The "conscientization" process implies that the people realize that they are oppressed, and that they also know that they can liberate themselves if able to transform the concrete situation in which they find oppression. This

---

<sup>55</sup> Paulo Freire, "A Letter to a Theology Student," Catholic Mind 70, no. 1265 (September 1972): 7.

<sup>56</sup> Paulo Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness (New York: Continuum, 1973), 19.

transformation cannot be transformed by the head alone. Awareness alone cannot create reality. All this implies a critical insertion into a process, a commitment to make changes.

Conscientization involves the denouncing of the dehumanizing structures and the announcing of structures that will humanize. This is the prophetic task of educational ministry. In the Old Testament the prophets are those who denounce and announce, those who are committed to a radical process of transforming the world. Precisely, Freire sees a close similarity between this process and a theology of hope, since conscientization clearly has to do with what he calls "utopia." From the liberation theologies perspective (especially Latin America) "Utopia" is the term they use to describe "Salvation" and "Kingdom of God." Educationally, this approach does not merely domesticate by transforming knowledge. Rather, conscientization makes it possible for a true act of knowing to occur as both teacher and student are brought simultaneously as subjects by the object they are learning. In short, both are inquisitive and desirous learners.

#### **Paulo Freire's Hermeneutic**

In a sense, Freire's conscientization approach is a hermeneutical process. His hermeneutic belongs to the type known as the "Hermeneutic Circle" or the "Hermeneutic of Suspicion." This methodology was coined and closely

associated with Juan L. Segundo, the author of The Liberation of Theology. This approach is common among liberation theologians. It starts from the other end.

The hermeneutic circle is "the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal."<sup>57</sup> This means being suspicious that anything or everything involving ideas, including theology, is ultimately bound with the existing social situation in at least an unconscious way.

It is becoming obvious that liberation (theology) deals not so much with content as with the method used to theologize in the face of our real-life situation.

The hermeneutic circle has four steps. First, it deals with previous actual human experience. In the attempt to change the world, it takes into account our way of experiencing reality, the existential situation. In the second step, the main focus is to unmask reality. This involves total commitment, the application of one's ideological suspicions to the whole particular (theological) situation. Third, the emphasis is to change theology, focusing on the new directions or a new way of experiencing (theological) reality. Last, there is emphasis on new

---

<sup>57</sup> Juan L. Segundo, The Liberation of Theology (New York: Orbis, 1976), 8.

interpretation, a new hermeneutic, a new way of interpreting our faith.<sup>58</sup> In short, the "hermeneutic circle" incorporates previous and present experience, a sense of commitment, awareness of directions to change (theology), and a new interpretation of the faith story.

#### Summary of the Theorists

By way of a brief summary here, I will sum up the theorists' work in the form of a chart (see pages 87-8 below). The categories that will be used to describe their theories are the "structural elements of an educational theory for religion."<sup>59</sup>

#### Synthesis of the Theorists

The work of the above theorists definitely emerged out of different perspectives, experiences and situations. Nevertheless, there are elements that are common to all of them. One of the categories that is significantly important in all the theories is theology. They may all have a different definition of theology, but they all acknowledge the fact that a theological foundation is a necessity for the educational ministry. To talk about God, humanity and the world is a theological phenomenon. Thus, theology for the most part, determines and suggests the other activities

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>59</sup> C. F. Melchert, "Structural Element of an Educational Theory for Religion," Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, Va., Photocopy, n.d.

CATEGORY	MILLER	WESTERHOFF	GROOME	FREIRE
Problem	Life that is not theologically rooted, theology that is not empirical and pragmatic.	School--instruction paradigm is <u>too</u> limiting for what the church is about.	Lack of vision of the Kingdom, living in ignorance.	Oppressive structure, illiteracy and ignorance. Lack of freedom.
Strategy	Participatory. Social interaction model.	Socialization. Focus on liturgy, worship, catechism as induction into the community life.	"Shared-praxis," focus on communal praxis.	Conscientization. Emphasis on praxis (action-reflection).
Outcome	God at the center of life. "Right" relationship with God and our co-humans.	Enculturation into a community of faith, and therefore faithful people and disciples.	Confessing the faith, living the story and vision. Praxis.	Praxis, action-reflection. Reconstruction.
Rationale	"Right" relationship is theologically oriented. Theology is vital in human interaction/relationship with God and others.	One becomes a part of a community of faith and own that faith through enculturation, through a more wholistic process than schooling--instruction.	We enable people to tell their stories so that they can identify with the Biblical story and become agents for the Kingdom and reconciliation.	Need to make the people conscious of their situation, identify with the reality of the situation, and participate in the reconstruction and social reform.



CATEGORY	MILLER	WESTERHOFF	GROOME	FREIRE
Teacher	A theological thinker. Relationship with learner is important.	Socializer, a guide in faith. One who is part of the community, embedded in the culture.	Presenter of the vision and the story. Storyteller, facilitator of others telling their story.	"Conscientizer," enabler. One that poses problem, guides the learner.
Learner	Human in relationship.	One needing to be socialized, the owner of faith.	Storytellers, interpreters, agents for the Kingdom.	Problem-solver, social and political being who has capacity for self-critical reflection. Agent of Reconstruction.
Content	Theology is supreme. Theology is the <u>clue</u> .	Bible, theology are important, traditions of the faith.	Theology and education, theology/ the vision is definitive. Bible-- source of story and vision.	Education for conscientization. Issues of everyday life are open to critique.
Context	The church in the world.	The community of faith.	The community of faith as a vision of the Kingdom in the world.	The social and cultural community. Conscientization is needed in every community.

of the educational ministry. Theological interpretation, presupposition, creates the platform from which the practice of educational ministry is constructed.

The other common element in the theories of the selected educators is the emphasis on participation. Generally speaking, the strategy they suggest for the educational task is through active participation. However, participation is accomplished in and through different forms, such as through socialization, enculturation, shared praxis, and conscientization. All these are participatory ways to achieve the specific task(s) called for in the educational process. It entails attaining (right) relationships, discipleship, Christian becoming, living the faith, as well as hope for reconstruction. In short, the (teaching) method prescribed for the task is the social interaction model, the dialectical process.

Another element that is common among the theorists is the holistic approach to educational ministry. The focus is on the whole person, the whole of the community. To be in relationship with God and others involves the whole person, as well as the community. Becoming Christian through socialization involves the whole self and the community into which one is enculturated. Likewise with the focus on the "shared praxis" process. To live in faith and the Vision of the Kingdom is a dialectical process that includes the whole of the person and others. Conscientization is an action-

reflection process that entails a critical assessment of one's state of "being" (the whole person) in relationship to, and within the context of one's social, cultural, economic and political environment.

One of the other dimensions of educational ministry is intentionality. This dimension is also evident in the work of the selected theorists. Education is an intentional process. Thus, any activity in the educational practice that is not intentional, is not educational in the strict sense of the word. Educational ministry is a deliberate and intentional activity in which both the teacher and the learner are participants and co-learners.

Further, educational ministry is also a social process and a political activity. By this I mean, it is practiced within the social structure of society. It is political in the sense that it involves the people and their welfare. The context of the educational ministry is the community, the church. Educational ministry takes seriously the significance and the importance of the learner and utilizes his or her experience. In short, educational ministry has the task to relate and incorporate its theory and practice, to be cohesive and congruent in its practice.

### Implications

The educational ministry of the church in Samoa if it is to remain faithful to its task and purpose needs to critically assess its theoretical foundation. This is not

suggesting that the Samoan educational ministry does not have a theoretical foundation. On the contrary, I feel the educational ministry is operating on unrevised techniques and strategy. In other words, the implementation of the nature of the educational enterprise, for the most part, is not congruent. Sometimes, there are (minor) changes to the methodologies used, but the aim(s) are still the same.

One of the elements in the educational ministry that needs revision is its theology. Samoan educational ministry is still formulated on "unrevised theology", theology that is foreign, the "missionary theology," a theology that is "rigid" and neo-colonial. This suggests that the theology as it is practiced within the church does not address the problem of neo-colonialism within the church and among the Samoans.

The understanding of God as presented within the Samoan church was often not a symbol of freedom, but rather, the extension of the European church experience. The problem is not that the so-called "imports" may not have a place in the Samoan church and spirituality. Rather, that God is understood and taught through other people's experience (particularly those from abroad). To interpret God and Christianity in such a way is taking a great risk in making God a foreigner to the mind and the understanding of the people. By doing so, the people have the tendency to have what I call a "colonized mind" or better still a "colonized

faith." In fact, there are some people who are so at home with the foreign gospel that any attempt for indigenization is to them a foreign concept. Thus, the task called for is "decolonizing theology."<sup>60</sup> This is constructing a theology that arises out of the people's own situation, and determines for their own situation.

The task of theology within this frame of reference is interpretation of faith and gospel in the Samoan situation. It entails the suggesting and testing of images, ideas, concepts in the Samoan (contemporary) situation. It calls for an assesment and criticism of the transmitted ideas for an adequate understanding of God and humanity in the Samoan eyes and mind. Doing theology in this way seeks to analyze the meaning of life in God within the Samoan cultural situation. Further, it examines the liberating act of God (revelation in Christ) in the experience and context of the Samoan people. This task involves the process of raising consciousness about the situations in relation to the message of the liberating gospel.

The "how" (strategy) of this way of doing theology is indigenization and conscientization. Indigenization is usually misused and misunderstood. It is usually referred to as using the local (indigenous) people (humanpower) to do

---

<sup>60</sup> I am indebted to Noel Leo Erskine for the use of the term "decolonizing theology" as discussed in Decolonizing Theology (New York: Orbis, 1979).

the work. The truth of the matter is, many times the local people are used but the content of work is always shaped and wrapped up in and with foreign clothing (theology, liturgy, creedal form, just to mention a few). Indigenization implies critical participation in finding ways to do ministry, utilizing the religious, social and cultural phenomenon of the indigenous community. In other words, indigenization through socialization. It is the process of conscientization.

Socialization is not a Western concept and practice; it is a common indigenous practice. In this sense, socialization is also a Samoan cultural practice. It is a traditional Samoan educational model. People learn about life, the world (environment), their tradition and culture through the socialization process. The coming of age in Samoa is not done in a classroom setting. It is done existentially, in the real life situation. The social community is the classroom where socialization takes place.

In this context, people are conscientized in the activity and process of life. Life is an activity, an action in the Samoan context. Life is an action-reflection process. So educational ministry in this context seeks to involve people in critical reflection and awareness of the conditions and situation of life, the relationship with God and with others. The context of this educational process takes place in the community at large.

The community (church) has a story, a life story. Raising consciousness enables the people to articulate and authenticate their story(ies). Christianity is a Story. It is a Story of a loving God who is involved and interacting with people, as well as interacting in and with the world. Thus, educational ministry has the task of keeping this story "alive" and meaningful at all time. This is the heart of narrative education.

One of the limitations of Western theories of religious education is the scarcity and the lack of emphasis on narrative education. There is the tendency in the Western theories of being bias toward content, and that the content has to be communicated in a more scientific, empirical, and pragmatic way(s). Consequently, the content of religious education is usually passed on to the people, the church, through a distorted "one way" dimension of narration. So evidently, narrative education is taken for granted and even ignored. The rise and popularity of modern science, the scientific emphasis on educational methods, minimize the utilizing of narrative education in western theories.

In traditional societies, like Samoa's, narrative education (use of stories) is an effective, traditional method of communication. The traditions, customs, culture, and even religious practices were preserved and handed down through oratory and storytelling. Through stories the people are able to relate and connect the historical past to

the present, and in a way provide "sign posts" or "pointers" toward the future. Customarily, the elderly people (usually the matai or "chiefs") gather together and share stories, be they genealogies, cultural events, social issues, and even life in general. The traditional narrative form of education may not be scientific in the strict sense, but educationally it is a very practical model of and for teaching. Further details on narrative education will be discussed in the following chapter.

#### Summary

Educational ministry necessarily needs to have a solid and enduring theoretical foundation. It should be relevant and appropriate to our day and age. One of the important elements in this task is theology. The influential contemporary proponent of this approach is R. C. Miller. Theology should be at the center of educational practice. By this, it implies that theology provides the perspective for the content, but the content should be taught in terms of the capacities and the interest of the learner. Thus, objective(s), theory, and methods of educational ministry need to be undergirded by theological reconstruction. Generally speaking, the task called for is "doing" theology constructively to fit in with the situation and to relate the content and method in an organic whole.

The socialization model focuses on the means by which the faith or culture is transmitted in the community. The



transmissive aspect of socialization is by participation in the life of the faith community. The faith is sustained and transmitted by participating in the rituals and the ceremonial activities. In other words, it is through enculturation that one is introduced into the community. Through the church worship, liturgy, and religious symbols, the people celebrate the faith together and thus transmit the (Christian) faith to the children.

The "shared-praxis" model is a reflective and experiential way of knowing that involves critical reflection on one's faith experience particularly in relation to the faith Story. In this model, the learner is described as a "pilgrim in time" involved in a faith journey. In short, shared-praxis entails a continuous dialogue between the pilgrim's faith story and the Story of the faith community. Such dialogue (a hermeneutic process) leads the person to appropriate one's faith and to so invite the person into making his or her own decision about the gospel and about life.

The conscientization approach to education refers to the development of critical awareness accomplished through dialogical process. This involves being aware and conscientious about the social, cultural and religious practices of the community of which one belongs. The main focus of this model is action-reflection. Conscientization is raising critical consciousness in the learner in the

educational process. In short, conscientization is a hermeneutic process that incorporates the experience, the commitment, awareness of directions for changes, and guides towards new interpretation of the faith story.

Educational ministry within the context of the selected theorists position(s) is primarily theologically oriented. Theology is the operating principle for the task called for in the educational ministry. Theology gives the perspective for the content of ministry. I have suggested that "participation" is the unifying strategy in the theorists positions though participation in this context entails socialization, and praxis. Educational ministry is a social process, it is intentional, and is community-oriented.

The implications for the Samoan situation call for a critical assessment of the theology relevant to and appropriate for Samoa. This calls for decolonizing theology, a call to decolonize faith. It means constructing a theology that grows out of the people's situation, shaped by their rich cultural heritage. Such theology calls for a holistic understanding of life, the world, and God. It is a call for an authentic and indigenous theology. Indigenization in this context entails the process of conscientization.

Further, conscientization implies shaping and reshaping the story(ies) of the people, the church community. The emphasis on story (narrative education) is a glaring

limitation in most Western theories of religious education. Narrative education is an effective practical educational model which will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### A Study of a Samoan Congregational Church

#### Introduction

One of the institutions that promotes and fosters the community life, culture, and identity of the Samoans, both locally and abroad, is the community of the church. The fellowship of the church community creates a sense of belonging. "I belong, therefore I am" is one of the slogans that portrays this understanding of the community. This community has a Story (Faith Story), and each one has an important part in that story. It is in this community where the people are helped to appreciate and share the full significance of the Christian Story. This project is not complete without discussing some practical examples of the actual practice of educational ministry in the Samoan community.

This chapter is a study and assessment of the self-understanding of the church, the educational ministry, and how it is related to the whole life of the church community. Through observation, listening, and dialogue, one can deduce something about the life of the church and the practice of educational ministry.

This chapter consists of five sections. The first

section is the description of the methodology used in the study. The second is descriptive information, which gives a brief historical background of the church. The third, the observation of some of the activities that go on in the church community. The fourth, the analysis of the church activities and other characteristic features of the community. The final section is the discussion of some implications for educational ministry and the summary.

### Methodology

The method employed in this study is the ethnogenic methodology of Ron Harre adapted by M. E. Moore.<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, ethnogenic methodology is the study of practice (people, community). It is a descriptive methodology that includes all of what is going on in the life of the community or in the world at large.

The goal of the study is to hear the congregation through listening and watching as a participant observer. The information was gathered with the purpose of entering

into the life of the community as a participant and observer, which means that the researcher becomes involved with the community, but keeps a certain distance from intimate relationships and responsibilities that could skew the observations toward one particular part of the community.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Mary Elizabeth Moore, "Teach us to Teach: Ethnic Congregations Teaching Through Their Stories," School of Theology at Claremont, Ca., Photocopy. n.d.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 9.

The task was to observe the congregation without influencing or shaping it. This observation included putting together the different activities and the stories of the individuals, and then finding out how they may fit together.

The data was gathered through informal conversations and interviews, and observations of the worship, symbols, liturgies, Sunday school classes, and social interactions. The underlying assumption was that the account given by each person or group reflected an understanding of the life of the Church and the practice of educational ministry.

### Descriptive Information

This section presents information and data relating to the historical and present context, and some of the activities that go on in the congregation.

#### Historical Background

Denomination. The Congregational Christian Church is the predominant denomination in Samoa. Originally it was called the London Missionary Society (LMS). The church (as the name indicates) was founded by the LMS missionaries from Great Britain. As indicated earlier, the whole structure of the Church reflects the image of the mother (foreign) Church. It was not until later that the name was changed from LMS to the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa. The name was changed but the structure was the same. Generally speaking, the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa represents a combination of Presbyterianism

(Calvinism) and Congregationalism (the reformed Congregational tradition of England).

The Village/Town. This is one of the biggest villages in the island. It is located on the shore in the western part of Tutuila (American Samoa). Like any other village in Samoa, this village is controlled by the matai system and the fono or council.<sup>3</sup> The Samoan aiga (family system) is the basic cooperative social unit and the economic unit of the village community.<sup>4</sup>

The first missionary (LMS) that came to American Samoa arrived in this town. Historically, this town is related (indirectly) to the establishment of the first boys' boarding school of the Congregational Church in American Samoa. The history of this church is interwoven in the culture and social practice of the village. For a long time there were only two denominations in this village (Congregational and Roman Catholic), but recently a few other sectarian churches have been established. As in many Samoan villages, there is always an interplay of the cultural practice and the church.

The Church. This church was started by a local resident of the village. He heard a new religion

---

<sup>3</sup> See chapter 2 for detailed information about the Samoan culture and the matai system.

<sup>4</sup> D. C. Clement, "Samoan Concept of Mental Illness and Treatment" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Irvine, 1974), 50.

(Christianity) had been introduced in one of the islands (Savai'i) in Western Samoa (1830), and he went there to find out about this new faith.<sup>5</sup> He received some instructions from the missionary there in Savaii, then returned to his village and started the church. By the time John Williams (LMS) arrived in this island (Tutuila in American Samoa), he was surprised when he was invited to come to church. In front of the church building in this village is the monument to commemorate the arrival of Christianity in American Samoa. This church is one of the biggest and well-known churches in American Samoa.

There has been much time and effort spent in the building of the "cathedral-like" sanctuary of this church. The architecture and structure of the church reflect the colonial influence and impact on the early development of this church. The congregational worship takes place in this very large church.

The main ceiling of the church is extremely high, and the floor is rectangular. The general floor plan has three levels. The pulpit, which covers most of the front part of the sanctuary, is elevated about six feet from the main floor level. There are stained glass windows behind the

---

<sup>5</sup> There is a story about a Tahitian Christian sailor from a shipwreck who was swept by the current to Samoa (1828-29), as well as reference to Methodist missionary(s) who arrived in Samoa about 1929. However, the official date documented is 1830 (LMS missionary).



pulpit and around the top sides of the wall. The main platform is about three feet above the main floor level, and the communion table and a lectern is at the top level in front of the pulpit. In front of the communion table is a rail about three feet high separating the front part from the rest of the sanctuary.

The platform and around the pulpit is well-decorated with bouquets of fresh flowers. By the wall on the right side of the pulpit is the American flag, and on the left there is the American Samoan flag. At the left side of the middle platform is seated the minister's wife (the minister and wife are usually seated). On the right side is the designated seat for the high chief of the village. The children are seated in the front pews; the choir seated in the middle section of the sanctuary, and the rest of the congregation in the side sections and the back section of the sanctuary.

### Observation

#### Worship

The worship takes place in the sanctuary. When the minister arrives at the pulpit, the introit is sung and the worship continues. The service follows the traditional Protestant order of service.

The Holy Communion is celebrated after the main service. The members who are not yet received through confirmation (confirmand) are dismissed before the Lord's

supper is celebrated.

### Rituals

Rituals have an impact on the life of a community. There are many rituals and events that take place in this church. When an elderly person was asked about the rituals in the church, she replied, "Worship is an act or ritual that the church does every Sunday."<sup>6</sup>

The gestures during worship are also rituals. The bowing of the head, or even standing up and singing during the offering are acts of rituals that take place in the church.

Further, one of the members of the congregation points out that baptism and holy communion are some of the rituals that are always observed in the church.

### Christian Education

Sunday School starts at eight o'clock on Sunday morning, an hour before the worship service. It becomes apparent that Christian education is only for children and youth. The children assemble together at the end of the hour, then the minister comes and says the closing prayer before they all go to the worship service. The youth group meets on Sunday night for Bible studies and fellowship. The teaching method used is transmissive.

---

<sup>6</sup> All the quoted sentences and phrases are taken from my field notes unless otherwise indicated.

## Analysis

### Theological Assumptions

God. There is a lot of God-talk or "God-language" in this church. Almost every church activity and religious experience is related, directly or indirectly, and justified by referring to such activity as an act of and for the service of God. God is named as the transcendent Being who dwells in another realm, but is present in the world. Further, God is described as the source of all things, all powerful and supreme. There is also an explicit understanding of God in wrathful and judicial terms. This is evident both in the language of the preacher (pastor) as well as the congregation. Jesus is thought of in terms of his redeeming act and sacrificial service. The Kingdom of God and salvation are perceived as something to be achieved in a supernatural world, a futuristic and otherworldly view of salvation. This is a clear indication of the dualistic understanding of God and salvation.

Worship. It is very clear that worship is important in the life of this congregation. As the family of God, the people gather together to worship and glorify God. Worship is the corporate activity of the people. In worship people offer praises and thanksgiving for God's gift of life and grace. Worship is an emotional and spiritual nourishment. One of the members of the church was asked how he felt after the worship service. He replied, "I have been nourished for

another week's work." In the act of worship, one is in contact with the source(s) that provides the sustenance for the self, for the person. In other words, through the act of worship one is involved in the activity of recharging one's battery, and enriching the tired spirit. This indicates that in worship, the person is in touch with God. It is in and through worship that people remember God's redemptive act in Christ.

In addition, people are drawn together as a community, and call for involvement and participation of the community. Through worship, the people reaffirm their sense of community, bound together in God's love. There is something implicit which suggests that worship or religious activities are a part of the custom and the culture of the people. History has indicated that the Samoans were always a religious people, and a worshipping community. An older member was asked about the worship service, and she replied, "Worship is important in our custom, and it is good for our lives." Thus, worship and the religious activities are parts or components of the peoples' culture. There is always an attempt to theologize the activities that go on in the community of the church.

In this frame of reference, there is always an interplay of what they do and what they believe. It might not always be consistent and congruent, but it is indicative of the way people understand themselves as well as what

shapes their faith. The faith of the people is shaped by participation in the activities of the church and the social interaction that goes on in the community of the church. Within this context, Fowler suggests that the task of the church is the "formation and transformation of persons."<sup>7</sup> It is through the service of worship that people acknowledge and reaffirm their sense of community, that they are bound together by God's love. Further, in worship the church remembers the redemptive act of God in and through the saving act of Jesus Christ. In worship, the community offers prayers, and prayer raises the consciousness of the people, thus providing time to listen to God.

Preaching. Preaching is an important element in worship. In the understanding of this congregation, preaching provides spiritual nourishment and nurture. Culturally, the spoken word (oral communication) has been the way the traditions were handed down, and so oratory has always been an important aspect of interaction (communication). Within this framework, the sermon is the way of God speaking to the people. Through preaching the people are made aware of God's doing in the present as well as in the past history. It reminds the people of God's act of love in and through history. Preaching "enable the

---

<sup>7</sup> James W. Fowler, "Practical Theology and the Shaping of Christian Lives," Practical Theology, ed. Don Browning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 155.

hearers as they stand before God to incorporate into their Christian memories those truths that come to them through other sources... helps expand the hearers' memories."<sup>8</sup> All these suggest that preaching helps people come to a clear understanding of the Word of God in the reality of daily life.

Fellowship. The other theological assumption that is evident in the life of this church is that the function of the church ministry is fellowship. People come together as a community for fellowship and to be in fellowship. Fellowship is one of the cultural characteristics of the Samoan community. They are a close community because it is a community that is continuously being in fellowship. Fellowship is part of the community's existence. It is a fellowship where there is room for everybody and where neighborliness is always fostered.

Educationally, the ministry of the Church is to promote and enhance fellowship. This fellowship is one where people find the true sense of belonging. It is a fellowship where people find shelter from loneliness, emptiness, and hopelessness. As a fellowship community, people need to feel the sense of being cared for, where hospitality is available, and where love and Christian growth is maintained

---

<sup>8</sup> Joseph C. Hough, Jr. and John B. Cobb, Jr., Christian Identity and Theological Education (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 76.

and cultivated. Moreover, such a fellowship community is a place where persons feel the presence of God and the signs of the Kingdom.

### Christian Education

This Church realizes the importance of Christian education. However, in practice it refers only to teaching the children and the youth. This Church does not have any educational program for the adults. This is indicative of how this Church understands the nature and function of education ministry.

At this Church, one learns religion (Christian belief) more through instruction, transmissive, and the content of education centers more on right belief (what to believe). This seems consistent with the emphasis on knowing and understanding the Church belief (doctrine) and the Bible. However, there seems to be incongruity with what is espoused (espouse theory) and the practice (theory-in-use).

The concern for knowing the Bible and the right belief was revealed in the interview with some of the teachers who expressed that Bible knowledge is basic for the children's upbringing. "It is good for the children to know the Bible. The youth should be taught the fundamental of the Christian faith." This overemphasis on the content (Bible) might suggest that one of the rationales for this is based on an understanding that the more biblical knowledge a person has the better it is for achieving salvation, a futuristic

reward.

Evidently, the teaching model that is predominant in this church's educational program is the distorted narrative method or the "banking" model. Although there are some indications of the focus on nurture and socialization, the transmissive emphasis is quite obvious. Further, education for all members is espoused in the overall program of the church, but the teaching of children and youth is specifically clear in the practice. How else to describe the misconception in educational ministry?

#### Mission

The Church contributes to the annual budget for mission of the whole Church. However, the Church is not very active in any local outreach or social action programs. While others may espouse mission to those beyond the congregation, the church has a good inreach program. Every Sunday afternoon, some elders of the church and members of their families are appointed to visit members of the congregation who are sick at home or at the hospital. The theological, as well as an educational question, that challenges this church is, "How does this church understand her mission and educational ministry in the context of the wider community?" In other words, what is her mission in the reality of the present day situation? Mission is both outreach and inreach. It entails active participation in the daily struggle of society and life in general.



### Persons and the Community

Generally speaking, the person (human nature) is considered good within the secular world. Ironically, in the church, there seems to be a theological understanding of the person as being depraved and incomplete. Thus, there is strong emphasis on "salvation" or "conversion." Sin is always mentioned, but there is practically no explicit reference that suggests the goodness of humanity. Thus, it is no surprise that the emphasis of education is on content, for it is assumed that adequate knowledge of the biblical tradition provides guidelines of the salvific message.

Further, the person is understood within the context of the community. The concept of private individuals is against the cultural understanding of society. This is consistent with the emphasis on the church as the corporate community. The welfare of the community takes precedent over the individual interest. Therefore, as a community of faith, the congregation articulates the participation of the community in the service of the church. The emphasis on the corporate aspect of the community is important, however the church is also challenged to recognize the individual.

### Religion

Implicitly, it is espoused that nurturing the community and fellowship are the basic components of religion in this church. However, this is not consistent with the theological exclusiveness, and is incongruent with the

emphasis on the doctrines and beliefs that one must know and believe. It seems that the practice is creating a community by teaching the traditional belief. Creating a community that is inclusive entails theological inclusiveness.

The religion of this congregation teaches persons how to live a good life in this world by focusing on the rewards of otherworldly existence (salvation or Kingdom of God). This strategy creates theological misconceptions, as well as misunderstanding, of the practice of educational ministry. To emphasize only the supernatural dimension of salvation will not support the life experience of "success" and satisfaction of the here and now (existential) of humanity.

### Identity

Identity involves the whole question of the "person and space." The identity of this church is woven into its cultural practice. Church and culture seem to go hand in hand. The issue of identity in this congregation bespeaks of its history and the heritage of the community, its rituals and world-view. In the Handbook for Congregational Studies, edited by J. W. Carroll, the identity of a church consists of several elements, such as, history, heritage, world-view, symbols, rituals, demography, and character.<sup>9</sup> This implies that the identity of a congregation mirrors its

---

<sup>9</sup> Jackson W. Carroll, ed., Handbook for Congregational Studies (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 23-44.

enduring culture.

Further, the identity of this church is formed through worship. The church is a worshipping community. Fellowship also contributes to the identity of the Church. The community of the people come together to fellowship, as well as to nurture people into the life of the congregation. So the church, by virtue of its nature speaks for what it does.

It is clear that the organizing principal in this congregation is transmitting the Christian faith. It is assumed and espoused that knowing the faith entails enhancing and building a fellowship community. It is through participation and the social interaction that the fellowship of the community is created. The teaching model is clearly instructional and transmissive, with implicit focus on socialization. The theology that is explicit in the educational practice of this church is conservative, focusing on knowing the biblical tradition and maintaining the church traditions.

#### Implications for Education

In the preceding discussion, it became evident that the educational ministry in this Samoan congregation is still operating under the missionary model. This is indicative of the practice of educational ministry in the whole Samoan church. There are many indications of the influence of theological misconception and dualistic understanding of education, such as the view of human nature, and the

misconception of faith as discussed in chapter 2.

### Reflections on Aim(s)

There are various implicit indications of the aim(s) of educational ministry of this church accounted for in the preceding. It varies from the emphasis on knowing the Bible, "discipling" method, "modeling" approach (model Jesus), to the focus on community building. Nevertheless, it is explicitly clear that the aim of educational ministry is the transmitting and imparting of the Christian faith. The basic concern is to communicate the salvific message. Thus, the task called for is to transmit the faith tradition. The goal espoused is conversion and the saving of the soul(s).

Within this framework, it is assumed that the prerogative of the educational ministry is to lead pupils to Christ, and to train them to be in good relationship with God (good Christians). Consequently, when the pupil(s) receives the proper training (education) through imparting of information, he or she is expected to radicate Christian living. This understanding of the aim of educational ministry presupposes right living in this world and a full participation in the eternal salvation (a dualistic, other-worldly view of salvation).

The limitation(s) of this perception of aim and educational ministry is apparent, both theologically and educationally. To be rigid and dependent solely on the

"otherworldly" aspect of aim desensitizes the educational ministry of the need for more fruitful development and practices. "True education can never settle for sameness. It is to be a leading out rather than standing still."<sup>10</sup> This implies that there is always a need to be critically conscious of the practice of educational ministry and what it entails. In this situation, it entails breaking through the barrier of the traditional practice, and critically moving toward new horizons, new developments and practices that are more fruitful and beneficial for the present life situations.

This suggests an openness to other avenues seeking creative ways and practices. It means constructing creative aspects of educational aim. This refers to the social-cultural dimension of the educational ministry within the context of Samoa. Such emphasis will seek to develop aim(s) which take seriously and meaningfully the human experience, the developmental process of education and faith issues. Educational ministry in this sense seeks to stimulate creative thought, reorganizing and reconstructing educational programs rather than remaining a tool of conservatism, indoctrination, and dogmatism. "A true educational process is denied as soon as education is made

---

<sup>10</sup> Groome, 8.

servant of any dogmatism...."<sup>11</sup>

Further, educational aim(s) recognize the cultural changes while at the same time continue in the biblical tradition. This includes focusing on the human situation, the culture, the church or community and its corporate life, and even the freedom of the students.

Within the context of practical theology, Don Browning suggested that Christian education should aim at creating individuals capable of entering into a community of theological reflection and participating in the action that would follow from it.<sup>12</sup> This approach is rooted in David Tracy's methodology of "revised correlation." This method of critical correlation focuses on interpretations. Thus, for Browning, Christian education should be seen "as first and foremost an interpretive or hermeneutical task."<sup>13</sup> I disagree with Browning regarding this dimension and method to Christian education. Christian education is not interpretation or character formation. If Christian education is limited to these activities, I believe Christian education has distorted its educational function and educative process. Why not call the enterprise

---

<sup>11</sup> Elliott, 318.

<sup>12</sup> Don Browning, "Practical Theology and Religious Education," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 79.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 80

"Christian character formation and interpretation?"

Educational ministry empowers others for ministry.

### Content and Methodology

The emphasis on the transmissive aspect of aim(s) is indicative of the content of education that is explicit in this congregation. The content is basically an authoritative, biblical message that has to be proclaimed to the students. Usually, with this approach, the arrangement of the content is done in such a way that it will maximize the transmission of the Christian faith or message. I agree with C. E. Nelson who said that the problem in the mainline Protestant church is that the process of transmitting a tradition (faith tradition) is working too well. It is producing in the rising generation what the adults actually believe.<sup>14</sup> It limits the educational process to impartation of information, and thus, it lacks the opportunity for creative, and critical reflection on faith and tradition. This is very true of the Samoan church. Consequently, the methodology used for teaching is usually the transmissive, misconstrued version of narrative education.

### Narrative Education

Earlier, I had alluded to the misrepresentation of the narrative model of education. In the authoritarian, dogmatic approach to narrative education, the teacher

---

<sup>14</sup> C. E. Nelson, 202.

basically narrates and the student listens. This falsified notion presupposes that the teacher has the knowledge and the student does not. The teacher fills the empty mind of the student with hollowed, alienated verbosity. Narration in this sense leads the student to memorize the content being narrated. Students are turned into "containers" to be dealt with by the teacher. The more completely the teacher fills the receptacles, the better teacher he or she is. "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher in the depositor."<sup>15</sup> It is obvious that in this practice, the students receive, memorize, and repeat the "givens" that are passed on by the teacher. In this "banking" (narration) concept of education, the students are allowed to receive, file and store the deposits.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the approach or model not only contradicts realities but also will not propose to students that they critically consider reality. This calls for a better alternative model.

The proper narrative education model is primarily storytelling. This approach encourages and invites storytelling in the teaching-learning process. In this model, everyone is a storyteller, and every story is important in the educative process. Storytelling is an art, a form of

---

<sup>15</sup> Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 58.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



human communication. It expresses feelings, ideas and meaning. Basically, stories can be descriptive, informative, analytical or visionary. Usually stories are formulated and grows out of social, cultural, economic, political, and spiritual situations in the life of the people. Thus, in this sense, story is a cultural phenomenon, and as such, it reaches out to all ages (young and old), sexes, and races. Within this framework, narrative (storytelling) has a multicultural dimension. Generally speaking, everyone is familiar with story, they can understand, and learn through stories. Educationally, this model fosters and cultivates autonomy and reciprocity in the educational process. This leads to my next point, which is liberation education.

### Liberation Education

In liberation education, unlike the "banking" model, there is a drive toward reconciliation. Both teacher and student are simultaneously teacher and student. "Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-student and the student-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers."<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, the teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is himself or herself taught in dialogue with the student. Thus, they are jointly responsible for a process in which

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 67.

all grow. In this process, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. The teaching-learning is a reciprocal process. The liberating aspect of education suggests a problem-posing understanding of the educational process.

### Problem-Posing Education

The problem-posing education is also referred to as the authentic education. In this context, authentic education is carried out by "A" with "B" as mediated by the world. It is not education carried on by "A" for "B" or by "A" about "B." The object of action is the reality to be transformed by people together with other people. Educationally, through dialogue, people (teacher and learner) are made aware of their objective situation.

Therefore, the starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation. It must reflect the aspirations of the people. In addition, posing the situation as a problem not only challenges them, but also requires a response, not just at the intellectual level, but action as well. This type of education responds to the essence of consciousness, and intentionality, thus rejecting any form of oppressive communication. It emphasizes "being conscious of." Education in this context is not the transferral of information, rather it is acts of cognition in which both the teacher and student enter into dialogical relation. This type of education strives for the emergence

of consciousness and critical intervention (in reality). Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action (praxis) upon reality. Further, problem-posing education affirms people as being in the process of becoming.

Problem-posing education... as... praxis... enables teachers and students to become subjects of the educational process....<sup>18</sup>

In short, problem-solving education creates and enhances creativity and critical reflection.

### Summary

The goal of this chapter was to study and assess the self-understanding of the church (congregation) and the whole life of the church community, and how it relates to the understanding of educational ministry. The task involved observation of what goes on in the life of the church.

The methodology employed for this task is the ethnogenic methodology. It is a descriptive methodology, focusing on the practices and the activities that take place in the life of the church community. This was done through listening and watching as a participant observer. As the participant observer, the observer becomes involved in the life of the community but distant enough from influencing the practices. The information and data were gathered

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 74.

through informal conversation and interviews, and were fit together to portray the reality of the life of the community.

The identity and self-understanding of the church is shaped both by the people's culture and religion. It is woven into the fabric of its cultural practice. Further, worship articulates the sense of community identity. The church is a worshipping community, a community of people who come together to and for fellowship, as well as a community in mission.

The traditional aim(s) of educational ministry limits the educational practice to a transmissive model. This model encourages the narration approach to teaching and learning. It maintains and controls conservatism, authoritarianism, and dogmatism. The aim(s) of educational ministry necessarily, takes seriously and meaningfully the human experience, the social-cultural situation, and even the freedom of the students.

Transmissive focus on aim(s) prescribes a transmissive methodology, most obviously the narration method, for the educational task. This model presupposes the teacher to be the "knower" and the student is the ignorant learner. The students are turned into containers to be filled; they memorize the content of the narration. This limited focus in education suggests the need for a more autonomous alternative in the educational practice.

The narrative education model prescribes storytelling. Story communicates information, feelings, and knowledge. It is an agent of traditions, cultural and religious practices of the community. This model enhances the sharing of experience in a constructive, practical situation. Further, narrative (stories) can convey truth(s) and realities.

Unlike transmissive (narration) approaches to education, liberation education is interested in dialogue, and the teacher and students are co-learners, both responsible in the teaching and learning process. This is a reciprocal process; its focus involves problem-solving. In the problem-posing model, both the teacher and the student are involved in a dialogical process of teaching and learning. Problem-posing enhance creative learning and stimulates critical reflection. This method makes the student the problem-solver.

## CHAPTER 5

### Summary and Conclusion

#### Restatement of the Problem and Thesis

The problem addressed by this project is that the theological dualism imbedded in the church theology in the missionary era shapes the educational ministry of the church. This is apparent in the case of Samoa. This dualism contributes to the fallacy and misconception of the educational ministry, as well as the lack of awareness of the other forms of dualism in the educational practice. The lack of critical consciousness and awareness of the theoretical and theological foundation of the educational enterprise compounds the problem and complicates the notion of educational ministry. The Church in Samoa had dwelt in this (conservative) missionary model for a long time. It is time for some reorganization and reconstructions.

One of the perpetual fallacies in the educational practice is the implicit assumption that educational ministry is the teaching of the children and the youth in the Christian faith. In the educational ministry in Samoa, there is no educational program(s) for the adults. This is indicative of the assumption (unwritten tradition) that the

adults (supposedly mature in the faith) are socialized in the faith community, whereas the children and the youth are to be instructed about the right belief and the church tradition.

Consequently, the older adults (ages 25-40) always feel like a lost tribe in the educational ministry of the church. In most cases, this age group has no association with the educational ministry in general. They are too old to be part of the Sunday School, and too young to belong to the decision-making body of the church. There seems to be a dichotomy between education and school. For most, educational ministry is a synonym for Sunday School. This is a distorted perception of education and limits the scope of educational ministry. Education is an end in itself, it is a continuous process, whereas schooling can be limited to what goes on in a classroom setting. Educational ministry necessarily is for all generations, as well as being intergenerational.

Another misconception is the assumption that educational ministry is primarily doctrinal and biblical. This misconceived notion of the educational practice blocks out the social, cultural, political, economic, environmental concerns of the educational ministry. Thus, to some people, educational ministry within this context is not something that is directly related to their needs. It is the task of educational ministry to incorporate and address the diverse

needs of the church community even the society at large.

Unrevised objectives, techniques and methodology limits the effectiveness, fruitful changes and development necessary for the educational ministry. These are only a few examples that reflects the problem. Thus, the point at issue is the lack of critical consciousness of the practice of educational ministry and what it entails.

Within this frame of reference, and with the nature of the problem identified, the task that is called for is "conscientization." The thesis of this project is that raising critical consciousness and awareness, and constructing a clear and adequate foundation (theoretically and theologically) will improve and prevent the educational ministry in Samoa from stagnation. Constructing an educational ministry that is theologically authentic and educationally appropriate to the cultural "climate" and heritage will offer solution(s) to the problem.

The point of issue is that by raising critical awareness, and cultivating action-reflection (praxis), the people (church) are invited to assess and be in touch with the practice of educational ministry in their local setting. This dialectical process entails examining the theological dualism that shapes the teaching and educational practice. It is through this hermeneutical process that a new theology that is authentic and contextualized will evolve. This theology, which grows out of the experience, the culture and



the life of the people, is the foundation for educational ministry in Samoa. Indeed, it is prime time for reconstruction.

### Summary of the Summaries

The Samoans are social, polite, and cheerful people. Their identity is shaped by a cultural understanding of a corporate, fellowship community. As a community, the Samoans were always religious people before the arrival of Christianity. They were familiar with religious practices, as well as familiar with theological conceptualization, though the missionaries did not understand them this way. So, theological thinking was not something peculiar to Western practices. The Samoans relationships to their native god(s), people, and world was theologically oriented, though some might suggest that such theology is not empirical and pragmatic. Community and relationship is central in their social, cultural and religious practices. Their culture is so embrative of nature that they have a holistic view of life and what it encompasses.

Western Christianity (civilization and technology as well) was introduced as something which would be good for the island people. Evidently, theological dualism was at the heart of this new religion. The theological dualism implanted in the Church's theology has shaped the form of the educational ministry. This is quite apparent in most island (missionary) churches like Samoa. The Samoan Church

receives all its knowledge from the missionary movement whose underlying aim was conversion, and the smashing of the island gods. The unresolved Western theological dualism was embedded in the structure and organization of the educational ministry in the islands. On one hand, there is no question that the missionary movement had a genuine motive for their courage and task, and they should be complimented and congratulated for the job done. However, on the other hand, what they espoused and the strategy utilized were not always congruent. Subsequently, it created some misconceptions and other forms of dualism in the practice of educational ministry.

One of the basic form of dualism is the view of human nature. The soul is the seat of reason and, therefore, is good and the body is evil and mortal. Consequently, this constitutes a negative view of the human nature as depraved and corrupted.

The other main forms of dualism is the split between the self and the body, the "spiritualistic dualism". The "sexist dualism" produces a distorted view of theology, because it prescribes submission and subordination by emphasizing the male conceptualization of God.

The misconception of "faith" is rooted in the dualism in theology. The intellectual and the affective dimensions of faith are inseparable. They belong together in the "faithing" process.

Educational practices that are designed with a dualistic understanding of the person, life, and community are primarily cognitive oriented. True education seeks to integrate both the cognitive and the affective aspect of knowing. It is both objective and subjective. Further, awareness of the negative effect of dualism on education challenges us to seriously assess and review our theology and educational practices. It suggests creating a more holistic approach to educational ministry.

Theology is one of the important components in constructing a theoretical foundation of educational ministry. This proposes that theology provides the perspectives for the content of education. In this sense, theology is at the center of educational ministry. This suggests that theology undergirds the educational objectives and methodology.

The socialization approach emphasizes the transmitting of faith through the enculturation process by which one is introduced into the community. This is accomplished by participation in the worship, rituals and the ceremonial activities of the church. These activities are the ways people celebrate and transmit the faith.

The action-reflection process is the foundation of the "shared-praxis" approach. This process necessitates dialogue between the individual's faith story and the Christian Story, and focusing on appropriation of the

person's faith. This is also the heart of the "conscientization" process. Raising critical consciousness incorporates the faith experience, seeking new directions and new interpretation of the Christian faith.

The case study demonstrates that the identity, the self-understanding of the Church and its educational ministry is fabricated by their culture and religion. The significance of worship and the importance of the fellowship intensifies the community's sense of belonging. The transmissive emphasis on education perpetuates the monologue educational model. Hence, a dialogical approach in the educational practice is much more appealing and constructive. This reciprocal educational process cultivates creativity and critical reflection in the learning-teaching practice of educational ministry.

### Conclusion

To construct a theory and theology of educational ministry that is most appropriate and genuinely relevant to the Samoan Church needs a radical assessment and reconstruction. This proposes a critical reflection both on the practice(s) and an examination of the ingredients that constitute educational ministry. It entails an analysis of the church's "espoused theology," as well as a critique of the "theology-in-use." Likewise it requires educationally a diagnosis of the "espoused theory" and the "theory-in-use." This process addresses the issues and assumptions that are

implicit and explicit in the theology and the educational practice.

It is crucial to me that the Samoan Church requires a serious reassessment of its theology. This implies advocating an authentic, contextualized Samoan theology. This is a laborious and painful task, for the "missionary theology" has been the "bride" of the Samoan church for a long time. However, gone are the days when the "missionary theology" was the operating principle in the life of the church. The church reformed is always being reformed (reformata sed semper reformanda). Theology should be recontextualized and be made local.

The quest for a Samoan theology is an effort to locate and cultivate the Christian faith and Gospel in the local (Samoan) soil and context so that it will grow in the local social and cultural climate. Apparently, Christianity in Samoa is a Western theological pod transplanted in the islands. If theology and educational ministry have any meaning to and for Samoa, they should be indigenized, as well as contextualized. Theology is not done in a vacuum. All theologies are contextual. This calls for indigenization and contextualization of theology in Samoa.

In retrospect, this writer proposes the "conscientization" of theology. Conscientization is an action-reflection process (praxis). It embraces critical reflection on the notion of God in relation to the

existential situations of the social, political, economic and cultural practices, as well as life in general. This is a theology that evolves out of the existential situation(s) of the local people. This hermeneutical process is the "authenticating" of theology.

Conscientization is first and foremost a process. It is a continuous and ongoing interaction that seeks to provide adequate and effective ways for appropriation and interpretation of the Christian faith in life situations. To this end, conscientization includes the activity of indigenization and contextualization of theology. These processes (indigenization, contextualization) refers both to the cultures, history and customs of the local people, as well as to that which grows out of the indigenous culture. Consequently, conscientization as a process is an agent of transformation culturally, politically, economically and even spiritually.

Within this frame of reference, conscientization is a theological activity. It is a theological method in the sense that through action-reflection, it addresses realities, social and cultural situations, and even the meaning and purpose of life. Socialization advocates a dialogical process between the Christian faith and the particular culture(s). This process discourages the assimilation of theology without critical reflection, thus, avoiding taking Western theology for granted. All in all,

conscientization of theology ensures that Christian faith is rooted in a particular cultural context. Furthermore, conscientization of theology is an agent of liberation and transformation.

Educationally, conscientization proposes the development of critical awareness achieved through dialogical educational programs. It prescribes the liberation and problem-solving approach. The process of raising critical consciousness embraces the challenge for transformation and reconstruction. It enhances the dialogical and dialectical process of education and interpersonal relationship, as well as the life of the community at large. Necessarily, "conscientization" challenges the role of the church, educational ministry, and the community at large.

Within the conscientization educational framework, the role of educational ministry is not domestication. Rather it must be the role of liberation of education. If the status quo is preserved then radical changes and transformation is prevented. To change the status quo is not revising old methods and practices, but rather revising the whole structure. This implies overhauling educational ministry. The church must be continuously prophetic, and education is an instrument of transformation. This means a call for rebirth based on reflection of that which evolved out of the local soil.

In sum, conscientization of theology and educational practice, suggests that the church and the educational ministry must be liberated from being overshadowed by Western theology and being beclouded by the "missionary theology." This is considerably important in order to develop a theology that is rooted and relevant to a particular cultural climate. Conscientization as an educational methodology anticipates transformation of life when confronted and challenged by the Christian Gospel. Subsequently, it calls to restructure and overhaul the educational enterprise. Moreover, conscientization calls for liberation of humanity. The focus of the next research study is constructing curriculum design appropriate for the educational ministry in Samoa.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Alexander, James A. The Islands of the Pacific. New York: American Tract Society, 1895.
- Argyris, Chris, and Donald A. Schon. Theory in Practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982.
- Brumbaugh, R. S. and N. M. Lawrence. Philosophers on Education: Six Essays on the Foundation of Western Thought. Boston: Houghton, 1963.
- Buber, Martin. Two Types of Faith. Trans. Norman P. Goldhawk. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951.
- Burgess, Harold W. An Invitation to Religious Education. Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1975.
- Bushnell, Horace. Christian Nurture. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979.
- Carroll, Jackson W., ed. Handbook for Congregational Studies. Nashville: Abingdon, 1986.
- Coe, George A. A Social Theory of Religious Education. New York: Scribner, 1917.
- \_\_\_\_\_. What is Christian Education? New York: Scribner, 1929.
- Cremin, Lawrence A. Public Education. New York: Basic, 1976.
- Elias, John L. Studies in Theology and Education. Malabar Fla.: Krieger, 1986.
- Elliott, Harrison S. Can Religious Education Be Christian? New York: Macmillan, 1940.
- Ellison, J. W. Opening and Penetration of Foreign Influence in Samoa to 1880. Corvallis: Oregon State College, 1938.
- Erskine, Noel Leo. Decolonizing Theology. New York: Orbis, 1979.

- Freire, Paulo. Education for Critical Consciousness. New York: Continuum, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Trans. Myra B. Ramos. New York: Continuum, 1984.
- Gaebelein, Frank E. Christian Education in a Democracy. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951.
- Garrett, John. To Live Among the Stars. Suva, Fiji: World Council of Churches, 1982.
- Goodall, Norman. A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954.
- Green, Thomas F. The Activities of Teaching. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.
- Groome, Thomas. Christian Religious Education. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980.
- Hough, Joseph C., Jr. and John B. Cobb, Jr. Christian Identity and Theological Education. Chico: Scholars Press, 1985.
- Hurst, P. H., ed. The Logic of Education. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970.
- Keesing, F. M. Modern Samoa. Stanford: University Press, 1934.
- Lamm, Norman. Faith and Doubt: Studies in Traditional Jewish Thought. New York: KTAV, 1971.
- Le Bar, Lois. Education That Is Christian. Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1958.
- Lovett, Richard. The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895. Vol 1. London: Oxford, 1899.
- Lynn, Robert W., and Elliott Wright. The Big Little School. New York: Harper, 1971.
- Mason, Harold C. The Teaching Task of the Local Church. Winona, Ind.: Life & Life, 1960.
- Miller, Randolph C. Biblical Theology and Christian Education. New York: Scribner, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Christian Nurture and the Church. New York: Scribner, 1961.

- \_\_\_\_\_. The Clue to Christian Education. New York: Scribner, 1950.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Education for Christian Living. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Language Gap and God. Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Theory of Christian Education Practice. Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1980.
- Moore, T. W. Education Theory: An Introduction. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Nelson, C. Ellis. Where Faith Begins. Richmond: John Knox, 1971.
- Nelson, James B. Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978.
- Niebuhr, Richard H. Radical Monotheism and Western Culture. New York: Harper, 1943.
- Peter, Richard S. Authority, Responsibility and Education. London: Aalen & Unwin, 1960.
- Rowe, N. A. Samoa Under the Sailing Gods. London: Putman, 1930.
- Ruether, Rosemary R. New Woman New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation. New York: Crossroad, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology. Boston: Beacon, 1983.
- Segundo, Juan L. The Liberation of Theology. Trans. John Drury. New York: Orbis, 1976.
- Smart, James D. The Teaching Ministry of the Church. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954.
- Smith, Shelton H. Faith and Nurture. New York: Scribner, 1941.
- Tippet, Alan R. People Movements in Southern Polynesia. Chicago: Moody, 1971.
- Westerhoff, John H., III. Living the Christian Faith. Minneapolis: Winston, 1985.

- \_\_\_\_. Will Our Children Have Faith? New York: Seabury, 1976.
- Westerhoff, John H. III, and Gwen K. Neville. Generation to Generation. Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_. Learning Through Liturgy. New York: Seabury, 1978.
- Whitehead, Alfred N. The Aim of Education and Other Essays. New York: Macmillan, 1929.
- Williams, John. A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands. London: John Snow, 1838.
- Wyckoff, D. Campbell. The Gospel and Christian Education. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_. Theory and Design of Christian Education Curriculum. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961.

#### Articles

- Browning, Don. "Practical Theology and Religious Education." Formation and Refection. Eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.
- "Education for Awareness: A Talk with Paulo Freire." [Interview] Risk 6, no. 4 (1970): 7-17.
- Fowler, James W. "Practical Theology and the Shaping of Christian Lives." Practical Theology. Ed. Don Browning. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Freire, Paulo. "A Letter to a Theology Student." Catholic Mind 70, no 1265 (September 1972): 6-8.
- Grime, Howard. "Theological Foundation for Christian Education." An Introduction to Christian Education. Ed. M. T. Taylor. New York: Abingdon, 1960.
- Gutierrez, Gustavo. "Liberation, Theology and Proclamation." The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. Eds. G. Gutierrez and C. Geffre. New York: Herder, 1974.
- Westerhoff, John. "Formation, Education, Instruction." Religious Education 82, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 584-91.

Unpublished Resources

- Clement, D. C. "Samoan Concept of Mental Illness and Treatment." Ph.D. diss., Univ., of California, Irvine, 1974.
- Iofi, Faa fouina. "Samoan Cultural Values and Christian Thought." D.Min. project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1980.
- Melchert, C. F. "Structural Elements of an Educational Theory for Religion." Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, Va. Photocopy. N.d.
- Moore, Mary Elizabeth. "Teach us to Teach: Ethnic Congregations Teaching Through Their Stories." School of Theology at Claremont, Ca. Photocopy. N.d.
- Sala, Ulisese E. "A Theology of Samoan Immigrants in the United States." D.Min. project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1980.